WRC Rovanpera continues title march

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HOW PEREZ ENDED THE RED BULL CURSE

The challenge of being Max Verstappen's team-mate and why popular Perez has nailed it

'I want to beat Max, but I'm also Mr Happy because it's my team'

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How Perez has succeeded at Red Bull where so many failed

Sergio Perez has, this season, been the closest thing Max Verstappen has had to a rival for supremacy within the Red Bull team since the Dutchman's early days alongside Daniel Ricciardo. And the inevitable knock-on effect of this is that Verstappen also has, for the first time, a team-mate who can help the squad and its lead driver in its fight for titles, this year principally against Ferrari in place of Mercedes.

Perez has even been capable of outperforming Verstappen in qualifying – unthinkable! – so it was time to shine the spotlight on why the Mexican has succeeded where so many of the hotly tipped talents off Red Bull's junior production line failed. Matt Kew delves into the subject on page 16, getting feedback from, among others, Perez and Verstappen themselves. It seems that Milton Keynes is a happy place at the moment, with a quick but dutiful sidekick to its ruthlessly ambitious reigning world champion.

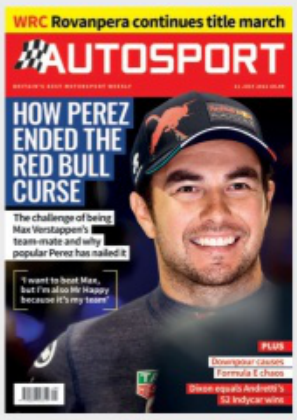
Over in a corner of Indianapolis things aren't so harmonious. The intended defection of reigning IndyCar champion Alex Palou from Chip Ganassi Racing to McLaren Racing (the group encompassing the F1 team as well as the Indy squad and its other operations) shook the paddock last week, and David Malsher-Lopez assesses what it means – a Palou future in F1, even? – on p14. On track, Ganassi veteran Scott Dixon stole Palou's thunder by claiming his Mario Andretti-equalling 52nd Indycar win in Toronto. Read about that on p40, and salute a legend!

Marcus Simmons
Deputy Editor
Marcus.Simmons@autosport.com

NEXT WEEK 28 JULY

French GP

Can Ferrari and Leclerc maintain their Austria form at Paul Ricard?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COVER IMAGE

Andy Hone/Motorsport Images

PIT & PADDOCK

4 Honda leaves door open to F1 in 2026
6 Palou shocks Ganassi in McLaren move
8 BMW picks DTM engine as LMDh basis
11 Preview: French GP
13 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
14 Opinion: David Malsher-Lopez
15 Feedback: your letters

INSIGHT

16 Perez's successful Red Bull adaptation
24 The Hyundai travelling WRC palace

RACE CENTRE

28 Rovanpera supreme on Rally Estonia
34 Formula E New York: Cassidy in the wet
40 IndyCar Toronto: Dixon's first of 2022
44 World of Sport: Super Formula; NASCAR; IMSA; Indy Pro 2000

CLUB AUTOSPORT

53 BRMs star at Shelsley Classic Nostalgia
54 Radical plans World Finals event
56 Jimmie Johnson tests Cobra for Revival
59 Guest column: Matthew Rees
60 National reports: Snetterton; Silverstone; Mondello Park; Oulton Park; Castle Combe; Silverstone; Cadwell Park; Bouley Bay; Val des Terres

FINISHING STRAIGHT

70 What's on this week
72 From the archive: 1983 Tour de Corse
74 My favourite track: Nick Cassidy

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Honda leaves door ajar for 2026

FORMULA 1

Honda says it has not closed the door on a possible Formula 1 return in 2026 as it keeps a watching brief over grand prix racing's plans for a carbon neutral future.

The Japanese manufacturer quit F1 at the end of last year, with its parent company wanting to divert its resources towards zero-emission technology in road cars, and Red Bull taking over the running of the Honda engine that powered Max Verstappen to the 2021 drivers' championship. An arrangement was made for Honda to continue the manufacturing, assembly and support for the engines, with the badges of Honda Racing Corporation (HRC) appearing on the Red Bull and AlphaTauri cars.

Honda's 2021 title success, and F1's major push for a carbon-neutral future ahead of its switch to new rules and sustainable fuels from 2026, has prompted speculation that it could be poised for a return. Such talk was fuelled by a visit to this month's Austrian Grand Prix by senior Honda staff, including CEO Toshihiro Mibe, its chairman Seiji Kuraishi, plus HRC president Koji Watanabe and its director Yasuaki Asaki.

While the company insists that there has been no change of heart about an F1 programme, it has admitted to closely following progress on the 2026 engine rules.

"Formula 1 is the top motorsports category, so we are always watching what is happening in the F1 world," said Watanabe. "Of course, we just finished and concluded our activities, so nothing has been discussed within the Honda company about 2026 season. So, no plan.

"My understanding is that F1 is discussing to decide the regulations for 2026, and definitely the direction is carbon neutrality. That is the same direction as us, so we don't have to [diverge] from carbon neutrality through F1 now. It is probably also a good opportunity to study carbon neutral F1, so it's not a closed door."

Asked what the key factors would be for Honda to give the green light for an F1 return, Watanabe added: "I think there are several factors we need to watch. But once we decided to conclude F1 because of mass production [road cars] and carbon neutrality, first we need to concentrate on this side. Then, once we can realise that we can achieve this, we can consider F1."

Regarding the timeframe for a decision about a potential 2026 return, Watanabe suggested that a call needed to be made by the end of 2023. "I don't know the exact timeframe," he said. "But if we want to return to F1 in 2026, probably we need to decide within one to one and a half years."

While a potential full-on return for Honda remains uncertain, an increased involvement with Red Bull, which is strongly tipped to tie up with Porsche should it enter F1 in 2026, appears likely. Discussions are under way about a closer

Honda has been in and out of F1 since initial entry in 1964

F1 return

technical partnership, allied to a change in branding focus on the Red Bull teams with the 'Honda' name to return.

Watanabe said: "At least until 2025, Honda is going to be a kind of partner of both teams. And although the detail is not decided yet, also HRC will become a kind of technical partner of both teams. We need to decide for the next season, but personally I want to utilise more Honda. So the combination of Honda and HRC."

When Red Bull took over running of the Honda power units for this season with its new powertrains division, it was originally believed that the Milton Keynes operation had bought the IP rights to the engines. This became especially relevant during discussions over 2026 rules, with the agreement that new entrants would be handed concessions to help them catch up with more established manufacturers.

Red Bull was eager to argue, ahead of its likely link-up with Porsche, that it should be classified as a new entrant while rivals suggested that its Honda DNA meant it should be classified as an existing engine manufacturer.

Watanabe has now clarified that Red Bull never bought the IP to the engine, so it returns to Honda after the current deal ends in 2025. "It is just a lease; so approval of utilising the IP," he said.

JONATHAN NOBLE

RICCIARDO: 'I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE'

FORMULA 1

SUTTON

Daniel Ricciardo says he is "not walking away" from either McLaren or Formula 1 amid speculation over the team's 2023 line-up.

The Australian took to social media last week to quell talk that he will not see out his three-year deal with McLaren, which runs until the end of 2023.

"There have been a lot of rumours around my future in Formula 1, but I want you to hear it from me," Ricciardo wrote. "I am committed to McLaren until the end of next year and am not walking away from the sport.

"Appreciate it hasn't always been easy, but who wants it easy! I'm working my ass off with the team to make improvements and get the car right back to the front where it belongs. I still want this more than ever."

Ricciardo's comments came a day after McLaren announced that it had prised reigning IndyCar champion Alex Palou away from Chip Ganassi Racing (see p6). McLaren also has another IndyCar frontrunner Pato O'Ward in its stable, and last week it handed a test in its 2021 F1 car to Colton Herta as the 22-year-old American is groomed for FP1 outings this year.

The talented youngsters with which McLaren is stacking its line-up across series are all believed to be eyeing a switch to F1.

FILIP CLEEREN

ANDRE

Masi parts company with FIA

FORMULA 1

Michael Masi, who was relieved of his duties as Formula 1 race director following the controversial 2021 title decider in Abu Dhabi, has left the FIA.

Since his replacement by Niels Wittich and Eduardo Freitas, Masi had remained in the employ of the FIA and was still undertaking some of his previous tasks away from the circuits. He returned to his native Australia in April and the indications were that he would leave the FIA once an exit plan had been agreed.

In an FIA statement, the governing body said: "He oversaw a three-year period as race director and safety delegate following the sudden passing of Charlie Whiting in 2019, carrying out the numerous functions he was tasked with in a professional and dedicated manner. The FIA thanks him for his commitment and wishes him the best for the future."

Masi provided a statement to Autosport, saying: "It has been a pleasure and honour representing the FIA as the single-seater sporting director and FIA F1 race director and safety delegate since Charlie's unexpected and tragic passing. I have now decided to leave the organisation and relocate back to Australia to be closer to my family and friends."

ADAM COOPER

McLaren-bound Palou in Ganassi wrangle

INDYCAR

LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Reigning IndyCar champion Alex Palou will drive for McLaren next year, but the question marks that remain over the deal are significant: which series will he race in; and how much will it cost the team for wresting him from Chip Ganassi Racing's grasp?

While there had been rumours since early May that Arrow McLaren SP was trying to land one of Ganassi's champions as its third driver alongside incumbent Pato O'Ward and new arrival for 2023 Alexander Rossi, two weeks ago Scott Dixon denied he had been in talks about leaving the team he joined in the spring of 2002. The six-time champion's dismissal of the AMSP talk came mere days after Chip Ganassi made noises that he was intending to keep his current line-up for next year: Palou, Dixon, Marcus Ericsson and Jimmie Johnson.

On Tuesday of last week, Ganassi put out a press release stating it had taken up its option on Palou for next year, but a few hours later the Spaniard denounced Ganassi's release, said he was leaving, and stated that the quote attributed to him in the release was fabricated.

Five minutes later, McLaren Racing — not Arrow McLaren SP — issued a release welcoming the 25-year-old to the 'family', and in which McLaren CEO Zak Brown commented: "We have always said that we want the best talent at McLaren, and it's exciting to include Alex on that list. I'm also looking forward to seeing him get behind the wheel of a Formula 1 car as part of our Testing of Previous Cars [TPC] programme alongside Pato O'Ward and Colton Herta as we continue to build our driver talent."

At last weekend's Toronto round, Palou didn't wish to comment on anything beyond his title defence, but there were clear implications that he was confident that, despite the Ganassi team's protestations to the contrary, he is indeed departing. When asked if his signing with McLaren was all above board despite Ganassi taking up his option, Palou said: "Yes, I have full trust in the people around me."

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

P14 OPINION

FIA fixed on Spa porpoising clampdown

FORMULA 1

The FIA insists that there will be no watering-down of a flexi-floor clampdown and that it plans to limit porpoising from next month's Belgian Grand Prix, despite resistance from Formula 1 teams.

In the wake of driver complaints about the safety implications of excessive car bouncing, the governing body introduced a raft of measures aimed at eradicating the phenomenon. It plans to introduce an Aerodynamic Oscillation Metric (AOM) at Spa that teams will not be allowed to exceed.

Furthermore, to ensure that the AOM applies equally to all competitors, the FIA is introducing measures to outlaw tricks some are understood to have played to flex their floors and planks for better performance.

While some teams have welcomed the FIA's intervention, others have been annoyed at its actions and believe it should have no right to dictate how teams set up their cars.

The matter was discussed at a meeting of F1's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) last week, where the FIA made clear that its stance on the matter was unchanged. In a statement, the FIA said it was absolutely resolute that the porpoising was a significant safety matter.

"It is the responsibility and the prerogative of the FIA to intervene for safety matters, and the reason the regulations allow such measures to be taken is precisely to allow decisions to be taken without being influenced by the competitive position each team may find themselves in," it said.

The FIA also fears that, as teams pile on improvements for their 2023 cars, the increased downforce could trigger greater problems next year. That is why it is sticking to a two-point plan to get rid of it.

Teams will be able to use the AOM at this weekend's French GP to better understand it, while the FIA will mandate a stiffening of the skid blocks in the plank of cars after it emerged teams had made them moveable to avoid being worn away. There will also be changes to the way the planks are measured, to ensure that teams don't use disappearing skid blocks to pass post-race checks, having worn down other areas of the floor.

JONATHAN NOBLE

New Acura hits track in France

IMSA

HPD

The new Acura LMDh prototype has undertaken its first testing miles ahead of its 2023 IMSA SportsCar Championship campaign. The ARX-06 developed in conjunction with ORECA was given a shakedown on Paul Ricard airport adjacent to the French track.

The roll-out close to ORECA's headquarters at Signes on the other side of the track was a prelude to the first proper testing over the weekend. The ARX-06 was taken straight to Magny-Cours for a two-day development run on Saturday and Sunday.

The Magny-Cours test was described as "two full days" by Honda Performance Development, which is managing development of the hybrid prototype. There was some night running involved on both days of the test.

Driving duties at Ricard and Magny-Cours were handled by HPD factory driver Ricky Taylor, who is racing in IMSA for the Wayne Taylor Racing Acura squad, and Matt McMurry. Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours starter McMurry is now forging a career as an engineer with HPD after graduating with a degree in aerospace engineering in 2020 and also has close links with the second Acura factory team, Meyer Shank Racing: he won the 2020 IMSA GT Daytona title in one of the team's Acura NSX GT3 Evos.

No further information on the test was available from either HPD or ORECA. It has yet to be decided where the first ARX-06 will test next, with options in both Europe and the US under discussion prior to the first of two official IMSA tests mandatory for LMDh entrants running in the series' GTP class at Road Atlanta in October.

HPD initially released only a short video on its Twitter account of the Ricard roll-out before putting out low-resolution photos. Technical details of the car, developed around the spine of ORECA's next-generation LMP2 contender, are expected to be released imminently.

GARY WATKINS

STALEY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Sims to leave FE for enduro shot

FORMULA E

Alexander Sims has decided to quit Formula E at the end of this season in favour of a return to endurance racing, where he admits to feeling more confident.

Sims has been active in endurance racing since 2012, initially in prototypes but largely in the GT categories. He figured in GTE Pro class victory contention with Corvette at this year's Le Mans 24 Hours before he was wiped out in an accident with an LMP2 car.

The 34-year-old joined Formula E in 2018 with the BMW Andretti squad, taking one win in 2019 at Diriyah before moving to Mahindra, where he has raced since 2021.

"I just never felt 100% comfortable with the [Formula E] car," Sims told Autosport. "I just find myself feeling a little bit lost through all of the race days. Which to be honest, I think a lot of people probably do as well. But I go back to endurance racing and I feel just more comfortable, more confident in myself.

"It's a shame because obviously I love what Formula E stands for; I'm really passionate about electric cars and sustainability. But now's the time just to make the change myself."

Sims, who has wins in the Spa and Nurburgring 24 Hours on his CV, is yet to secure a return to endurance racing at this juncture, but remains open to opportunities.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

BMW chooses engine for its new-era racer

BMW

BMW

M Hybrid V8 will be powered by new version (inset) of DTM unit

LMDh

BMW has confirmed one of the LMDh arena's worst-kept secrets: its new prototype is powered by a twin-turbo version of its former DTM V8.

The German manufacturer had only previously revealed that the internal-combustion component of the car's hybrid powertrain was a V8. That much was clear in the name of the machine announced last month — M Hybrid V8. Now it has outlined the technical specification of the V8 in the back of the car with which the Rahal Letterman Lanigan team will fly the flag for BMW in next year's IMSA SportsCar Championship. It is based on the second iteration of the normally aspirated DTM V8 — the P66/1, used in 2017 and 2018 — and retains the four-litre capacity of that engine, although it now runs direct injection. The 90-degree unit is now dubbed the P66/3.

BMW also evaluated the in-line four-cylinder turbocharged engine used in the DTM after a change in rules for 2019 and the road-based V8 turbo from the M8 GTE, which raced in both IMSA and the World Endurance Championship.

Ulrich Schulz, head of drivetrain design at BMW M Motorsport, said: "During the evaluation phase, we also took a look at the P48 four-cylinder turbo engine from the BMW M4 DTM and the P63 eight-cylinder turbo engine from the BMW M8 GTE. But potential problems with the durability of the P48 and the heavy weight of the P63 were negative considerations."

Schulz explained that BMW was able to use its experience from Formula 1 in 2000-09 in the development of the internal combustion component of the LMDh's powertrain, which is mated to a one-make hybrid system developed by Williams Advanced Engineering, Bosch and Xtrac.

The new engine has already been fired up in the M Hybrid V8 developed in conjunction with Dallara. The car will begin testing at the Varano circuit close to the Italian constructor's headquarters this month. The initial phase of the test programme for the M Hybrid V8 is understood to be scheduled for Europe.

The focus of BMW's LMDh programme will initially be on the IMSA series in North America, but it has already opened the door on a potential WEC programme in 2024.

GARY WATKINS

Tandy rejoins Ford squad for BTCC runout

JEP

BTCC

Endurance racing star Nick Tandy got behind the wheel with the Motorbase Performance Ford Focus squad in last week's British Touring Car Championship test at Snetterton — nine years after he first tested with the team.

The 2015 Le Mans 24 Hours winner drove Motorbase's 'spare' NAPA-liveried Focus (left) alongside team regulars Ash Sutton and Dan Cammish, and then hopped over to do some work in the car of Sam Osborne, the son of team principal Pete.

Tandy previously tested with the team at the same track in 2013, when he helped on set-up work.

"Working with Nick has been absolutely mega," said Osborne Jr. "He's a fantastic driver and has given lots of great feedback which I can take forward."

Motorbase protege Jack Mitchell, who raced a Team Hard BTCC Cupra in 2021 and is now competing in the Mini Challenge, shared the NAPA car with Tandy.

Another Mini ace, Dan Zelos, got another BTCC test shot with Excelr8 Motorsport in one of the squad's Hyundai i30 Ns. Zelos is a BTCC reserve for the Suffolk operation.

MARCUS SIMMONS

PROTOTYPE CUP GERMANY Freddie Hunt put his family's name on top of the Nurburgring podium last weekend, 46 years after father James's 1976 German Grand Prix victory. Hunt co-drove a Reiter Engineering Ligier to honours in the new-for-2022 Prototype Cup Germany, for LMP3 cars. Mads Siljehaug drove the opening stint, Hunt was in front when he emerged for his stint and did not make a mistake. The duo added a third place in the second race, which was won by the Toksport WRT Ligier of series leaders Marvin Dienst and Berkay Besler. They failed to finish the opener when Besler crashed, their only defeat so far. **Photo by ADAC Motorsport**

Sutton tops Snetterton test

BTCC

Reigning British Touring Car champion Ash Sutton topped last week's two-day Goodyear tyre test at Snetterton.

Three-time title winner Sutton headed a 1-2 for the Motorbase Performance-run Ford Focus squad from team-mate Dan Cammish, although neither of them has won a race so far this season.

Sutton was one of the drivers testing a new softer-compound Goodyear in preparation for the return of the option tyre to the series in 2023, and attributed his lap time to this. "Pretty much our whole day was based around testing out the option tyre and a few other things," he said. "I kind of took the limelight away from Dan who had raw pace on the right tyre if I'm honest. We were just running a completely different programme, as requested by Goodyear.

"We still made good progress with the car over the two days. We feel like we've had a lot of potential and that potential seemed to be showing in Dan's pace too."

Cammish was one of three drivers to be consistently at the sharp end in each of the four sessions across the two days. The Yorkshireman was in the top six each time out, Jake Hill was top five throughout in his West Surrey Racing BMW and headed the final period, while series leader Tom Ingram planted his Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai in the top four each time out.

Fastest in both sessions on the opening day was Gordon Shedden. The Team Dynamics Honda ace dropped to fifth on day two, when most quick times were set.

MARCUS SIMMONS

IN THE HEADLINES

ALBUQUERQUE STAYS PUT

Filipe Albuquerque will remain with United Autosports for a seventh consecutive season next year to compete in the World Endurance Championship. The Portuguese, LMP2 class title winner with Phil Hanson in the 2019-20 WEC, is the second driver to be confirmed for its 2023 P2 campaign after 16-year-old American Josh Pierson.

RICHES RETIRES FROM BTCC

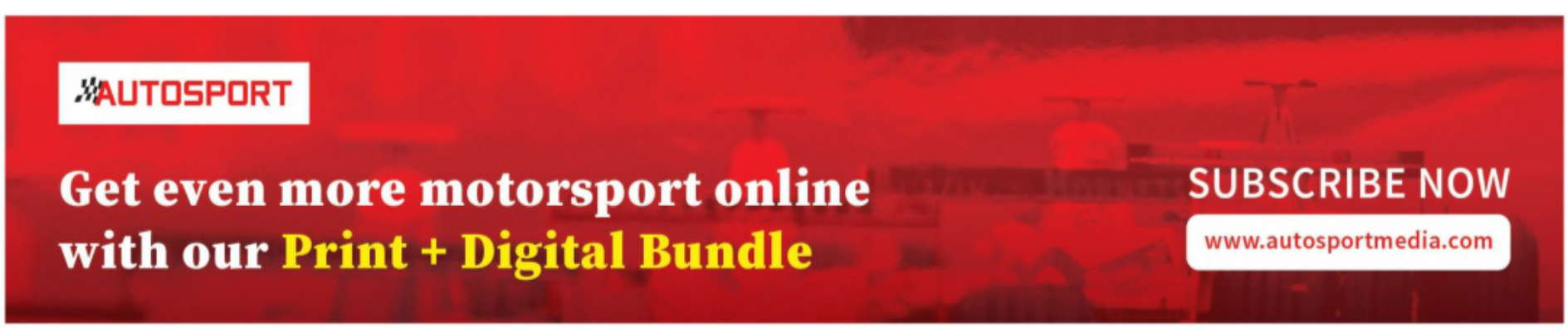
Veteran British Touring Car Championship technical director Peter Riches is to step down from the role at the end of this season to head into retirement. The 70-year-old will have clocked up 30 seasons in the series, starting as a scrutineer in 1993 before taking on his full-time duties in 1996. He masterminded the series' indigenous BTC Touring and NGTC (in current use) rulesets, as well as the Super 2000 era and its national homologation requirements. Riches, who will continue as a consultant for at least 2023, will be succeeded by son Sam, who has been working for the BTCC technical team for two decades.

NEW TEAM FOR THIIM

Aston Martin star Nicki Thiim could represent the marque as a wildcard entrant in the DTM round at the Nurburgring at the end of next month. The Dane started the DTM season with the T3 Motorsport Lamborghini squad before splitting with the team after two rounds. An Aston entry would mean that it is the seventh manufacturer in the series.

HUGHES OUT WITH COVID

Single-seater veteran Jake Hughes has been forced out of the next two FIA Formula 2 rounds, at Paul Ricard this weekend and the Hungaroring next week, after returning a positive COVID-19 test. The Brit will be replaced at Van Amersfoort Racing by regular F2 substitute-for-hire David Beckmann, who has already filled in this year for two other drivers.



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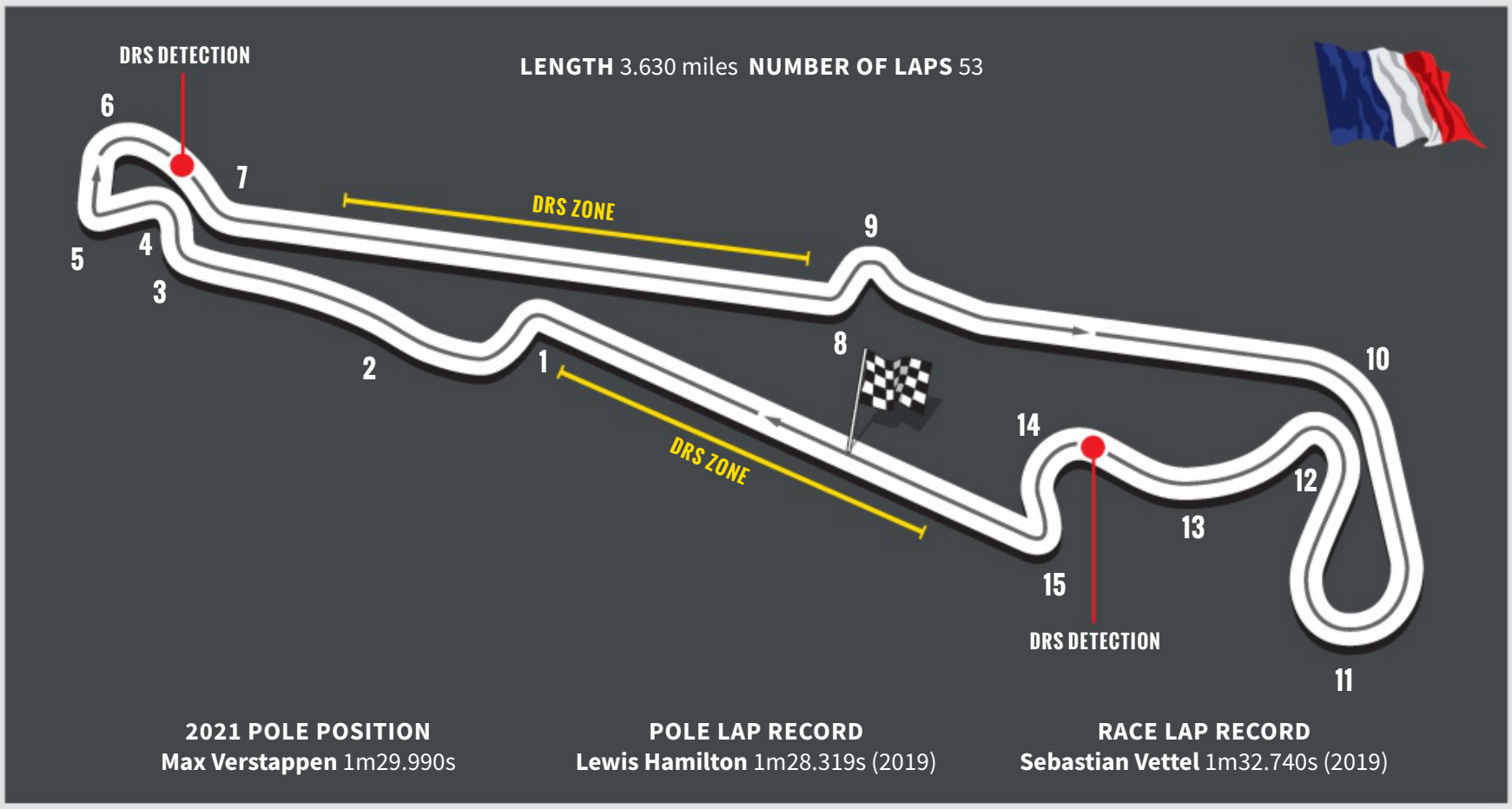

UK START TIMES

Friday 22 July
FP1 1300 **FP2** 1600

Saturday 23 July
FP3 1200
QUALIFYING 1500

Sunday 24 July
RACE 1400

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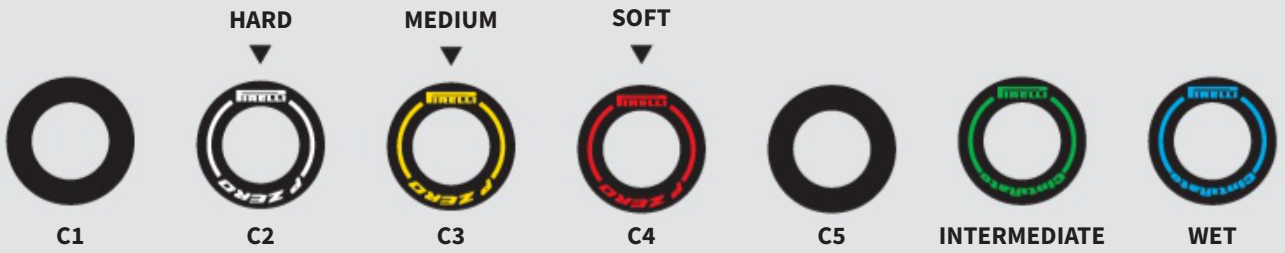


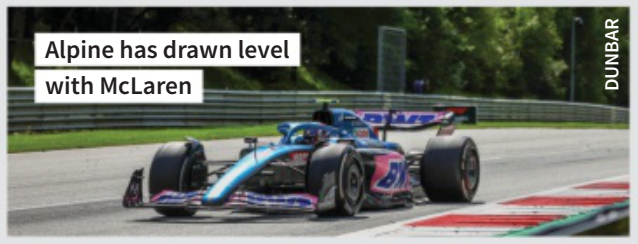
CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	**Verstappen**	208
2	**Leclerc**	170
3	**Perez**	151
4	**Sainz**	133
5	**Russell**	128

Constructors

1	**Red Bull**	359
2	**Ferrari**	303
3	**Mercedes**	237
4	**McLaren**	81
5	**Alpine**	81



RACE STATS

Previous winners

2021	**Max Verstappen**	Red Bull
2019	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2018	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2008	**Felipe Massa**	Ferrari
2007	**Kimi Raikkonen**	Ferrari
2006	**Michael Schumacher**	Ferrari
2005	**Fernando Alonso**	Renault
2004	**Michael Schumacher**	Ferrari
2003	**Ralf Schumacher**	Williams
2002	**Michael Schumacher**	Ferrari

French GP provided Alain Prost with his first F1 win, at Dijon in 1981
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Paul Ricard points tallies

Hamilton	68
Verstappen	56
Bottas	36
Vettel	23
Ricciardo	20
Leclerc	16
Perez	15
Sainz	12
Norris	12
Magnussen	8

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Assessing Formula 1's new rules

Halfway through their first season, how have the new cars shaped up in terms of improving the racing, and also revitalising the championship as a whole?

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

The early races of 2022 confirmed that Ferrari had achieved its ambition of returning to the front of the grid after its recent fallow years. But the early chapters of Charles Leclerc versus Max Verstappen came too soon to provide definitive answers regarding the success of Formula 1 owner Liberty's project (blessed by the FIA) on improving racing and the championship's overall health. F1 had simply had too many previous false dawns...

But with 11 races in the books this year and the same number still to come, the evidence is mounting up. The presentation on the rules reset at Austin nearly three years ago set out five key areas for improvement: 'raceability', 'competitive grids', 'financial sustainability', 'environmental sustainability', 'aesthetics/passion'. These will be worth revisiting regularly as F1's new era progresses, but halfway through season one is a neat point to start.

For now on 'raceability', from what has been seen so far in 2022, the new rules have worked well. By switching to a ground-effects formula and cleaning up chassis surfaces, the aim was to improve a car's downforce level by 31% when following another and by doing so allow closer trailing for longer. The chasing drivers no longer encounter "weird snaps" as the turbulence reaches their front wings, according to Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, and as a result are no longer wearing out their tyres by sliding around excessively when coping with that extra movement.

"Silverstone produced the best example of multi-car, multi-team, multi-lap battling"

Silverstone produced the best example of the multi-car, multi-team, multi-lap battling F1 wanted regularly from its new rules. While this was thrilling, it cannot be denied that the late-race safety car intervention created those events. But the multi-team element of that battling was the main target of the 'competitive grids' aim. The current assessment of this success is, however, more complex and the evidence isn't as good for F1.

This is seen in Autosport's supertimes calculations. By this measure, the fastest time set at each event earns a perfect score of 0.000 and the remaining nine teams earn a percentage over that benchmark. Here, we can see that over the whole of 2021, the spread between the 10 squads was 3.222%. This comes down to 2.728% so far in 2022 and, while that appears to signify a win for the new rules, it's actually more complicated.

If we disregard the undeveloped, driven-by-two-rookies Haas from 2021, the gap from the top to ninth-placed Williams actually becomes 2.049%. Williams currently ranks 10th in the 2022 supertimes and so can be said to have slipped further off the pace. But it's at the front where the 'competitive grids' aim needs to be under closest scrutiny, because in 2021 five teams ended up within 0.909% of the ultimate pace. At this point in 2022, only Ferrari and Red Bull sit in that bracket (Mercedes is third, 1.059% back).

So far then, the second highlighted aim from the 2019 presentation is not the hit it seems, but at least F1 can enjoy a different team taking the fight to Red Bull at the front. Ferrari's resurgence has coincided with Mercedes' difficulties unlocking regular pace in the W13. But with just two squads taking wins so far, the hoped-for success spread that the rules reset heralded hasn't happened — yet.

The success of the cost cap in getting more teams to win regularly won't be felt for a while — if indeed it ever is. This is because the bigger teams have amassed more knowledge and skills on the art of winning than their smaller rivals. This advantage will continue to pay off in the coming seasons and can be seen in how slick Red Bull has usually been on strategy so far in 2022, while Ferrari has been left scrambling at times. The recent agreement over increasing the cap to combat rising inflation was also a compromise deal, with arguments over team spending showing no sign of ending. Indeed, if a cap breach occurs this year, things will get explosive.

When it comes to the new rules improving 'environmental sustainability', F1 has made enough progress that Porsche is on the verge of committing its might to the championship — almost unthinkable in the wake of the VW emissions scandal just a few years ago. But while the E10 fuel introduced for 2022 is the start of a journey the championship is targeting for 100% sustainable fuel within the planned 2026 engine changes, F1 still has an obvious image problem in the face of the climate crisis.

Finally, an assessment of the aesthetics of the new cars brings a major element of subjectivity. Overall, the new cars have achieved the aggressive styling F1 wanted, but — at least to this writer — when viewed side-on they lose this compared to their predecessors. Front-on or top-down, however, they're just gorgeous. It's also notable that the fears of such a tightly prescribed rulebook leading to all the cars looking the same did not come to pass. But it remains to be seen how much the teams converge next year. These will hopefully eliminate the porpoising phenomenon that has dominated 2022's tech talk.

So, overall, F1's new cars can be considered a hit and that is surely a big win for F1 and Liberty. But a close-racing scrap across the grid at Paul Ricard this weekend, where dullness reigned before several factors combined to produce an engaging contest in 2021 — that would be F1's new-era dream realised.

The saga of Palou's future

Wrangling over the reigning IndyCar champion's contract rumbles on. But in the meantime there's still this year's title to be fought for

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

Alex Palou won the IndyCar championship in 2021 – only his second year in the series and his first with Chip Ganassi Racing – and currently sits third in the 2022 points race with seven rounds to go, very much in the hunt to successfully defend his crown. Yet even if he conquers this quest, next year he will not be a Ganassi driver – and is unlikely to be one ever again.

The whiff of burning bridges started in early May, then grew in strength. As Autosport understands it, Chip Ganassi learned that Palou's 'people' – Monaco Increase Management, not Roger Yasukawa, who took Palou over from Super Formula to IndyCar – had been in discussions with McLaren. Were they seeking a negotiating tool with which to extract a higher salary from CGR in light of Palou's championship title? Or were they wooed by McLaren offering more money and a Formula 1 opportunity?

A more ethical – therefore more opaque – discussion point would be whether such talks should even have taken place as early as (we believe) April. Most IndyCar team-driver contracts state that the driver cannot discuss a deal with a rival squad until a certain month, usually quite late in the year, in the final season of his present term. This is to give his current employer time to decide whether or not to take up any option it may have on him. But can such governance realistically be applied also to a driver's management when their job is to research the best options for their client?

> **"Then came last week's full-force farce of statements and counter-statements"**

Whether or not there were breaches of etiquette in this matter, Ganassi was doubtless shocked to learn that the guy who scored his team's 14th drivers' championship in 25 years was willing to gamble on his future just a year later. And he will have fumed over who was trying to snatch his rising star: the mutual antipathy between Chip and McLaren CEO Zak Brown is strong.

Before the end of June, Autosport heard that Chip felt so aggrieved that he planned to take up Palou's option for next year but then release him at the end of 2023. "There will be two driver vacancies at Ganassi at the end of next season," a well-placed informant earnestly assured me at the start of this month. And then came last week's full-force farce of statements and counter-statements (see *Pit & Paddock*, p6). Stick a fork in this relationship, it's done.

Chip's disappointment is easy to understand. He gave Palou access to the finest collection of human and technical resources in IndyCar, enabling a prodigy to turn potential into victories and a championship. Sure, Palou made the most of the facilities at his disposal, but it was Ganassi that enabled him to demonstrate his gifts at the front of the field. Palou's pace, consistency and composure in his sophomore season would have been apparent whichever team he was with, but would not have yielded anything like the same results at, say, Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing or Dale Coyne Racing. Nor, probably, at Arrow McLaren SP…

Now, Palou is smart and will recognise that AMSP is blossoming but still needs a year or two to consistently bear fruit, yet he signed with McLaren anyway. For money? Well, Brown doubtless offered a higher salary than the one to which Palou agreed when he signed with Ganassi in 2020 as a largely unproven rookie with a single podium finish to his name. But it's doubtful whether the percentage increase in wage alone would persuade him to abandon the best ride in IndyCar.

How about those F1 test days? Palou has been added to McLaren's Formula 1 test programme next year, along with Pato O'Ward and Colton Herta, but would that and an income increase win him over? Debateable. So it's tempting to wonder if the Spaniard has already been pencilled in to replace Daniel Ricciardo in a McLaren F1 race seat for 2024. If so, maybe it was no accident that O'Ward's latest deal, announced in May, was specifically for the Arrow McLaren SP IndyCar team rather than McLaren Racing as a whole, and maybe, too, Herta's F1 test at Portimao was merely the fulfilling of a prearranged deal that has now been rendered irrelevant.

Before last weekend's Toronto race, there were rumours that Ganassi was so angered by the situation that he might replace Palou with either Ryan Hunter-Reay, now one of CGR's IMSA development drivers, or Tony Kanaan, who raced brilliantly for the team in the Indy 500. But common sense has prevailed: not only is the Honda-powered #10 Ganassi car primarily backed by NTT – IndyCar's title sponsor, and which won't wish to be associated with controversy – but Palou is riding high in the championship, and Chip is all about racing and winning. Having three drivers in contention for the title come the Laguna Seca finale is a realistic dream… as is having all three of them finishing the year ahead of AMSP pairing O'Ward and Felix Rosenqvist.

Last Sunday at Toronto, Palou's superb climb from 22nd to sixth reminded Ganassi what he'll be missing when they go their separate ways. But equally, with Ericsson extending his championship lead and Scott Dixon winning the race, Chip Ganassi Racing proved it can function just fine without Palou. The result may even have made the champ think again about what he's about to throw away.

P40 INDYCAR TORONTO REPORT

YOUR SAY

The crazy downforce of those cars. The drivers who piloted them. The sights and sounds of those cars on tracks like Laguna Seca, Road America and Lime Rock Park

ERIC BOUCHER

GTP evokes amazing era of sportscar racing

I just finished reading Gary Watkins's column on the debut of the Peugeot 9X8 (14 July) and while the article overall was well written and enjoyable, I continue to remain baffled by the refusal of British publications to refer to IMSA's new top-level category as 'GTP' now that the sanctioning body has officially renamed the class from the rather clumsy 'LMDh' nomenclature. It's further baffling that I continue to read actual negative comments in the same publications regarding the name change.

For anyone not born in the USA and who did not grow up in one of the greatest ages of sportscar racing in this country it may be difficult to understand, but the amazing era of GTP is one that pulled so many of us into the sport. The crazy downforce of those cars. The drivers who piloted them. The sights and sounds of those cars on tracks like Laguna Seca, Road America, Lime Rock Park and Watkins Glen to name just a few.

To many of us the initials 'GTP' still cause goosebumps at their very utterance, so I would ask that the 'new' name of top level sportscar racing in this country be properly used and respected by those who may not fully understand its importance to so many of us.

Eric Boucher
California, USA

From our side of the Pond we loved the GTP cars too, but as a British publication we're always going to lean towards the LMH/LMDh names used in the WEC. And in fact, Gary wrote recently of the frustrations of two different names being in use for the same ruleset. Just as you adore GTP, we'd love them to be called Group C over here... — ed

De Cadenet's 'borrowed' anecdote

If I may, I should like to correct an anecdote in the obituary of Alain de Cadenet (7 July). You write that Alain 'gave another [car] an illicit run down the M4 in Wiltshire in the dead of night to test [its] updated aerodynamics'. Although Alain was car owner and co-driver for the upcoming Le Mans 24, the driver on the M4 was actually the great Chris Craft, whom we sadly lost last year. A fully fledged professional racing driver at the time, Chris had told Alain that he would agree to drive his car at Le Mans only if he could be

sure that it would have a competitive maximum speed on the Mulsanne Straight. The simplest (or at least the cheapest) way of determining that was to do a Vmax run and then check the telltale on the tach. Chris did the run at dawn on the deserted motorway. The only hairy moment arose when, at full speed in the middle lane, he came over a blind crest — only to come upon a milk float tootling along before him, also in the middle lane.

In later years Alain was inclined to relate the anecdote, but with himself behind the wheel. He happened to make that claim once in Chris's presence, upon which Chris remarked: "That's funny, because I distinctly remember that I drove the car — and I don't recall that you were sitting in my lap at the time!"

May both these racing drivers rest in peace.

Gary Williams
Poole, Dorset

No smoke without ire

Am I just being an old fogey, or is the flares thing at Formula 1 grands prix, where the smoke is causing almost a fog effect on the track, getting excessive and rather silly?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone
Elland

Have your say, get in touch

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THE DRIVER WHO ENDED THE CURSE OF RED BULL'S SECOND SEAT

Being Max Verstappen's team-mate has been the undoing of several drivers, but Sergio Perez has finally made the job his own. Here's how

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Perez has found his feet at Red Bull and has a new two-year contract

For two weeks earlier this season, Sergio Perez achieved something no Red Bull driver had managed since Daniel Ricciardo in 2018. He made people, just for a moment, entertain the idea that a team-mate might have a shot at beating Max Verstappen in the standings. The Mexican outqualified his reigning champion team-mate in Monaco to tee up a fine victory. Next time out in Azerbaijan, he again pipped Verstappen over a lap to snare the higher grid spot. In that window, he was more effectively mastering the ground-effect RB18 and had the momentum.

Ultimately, whatever hype there was proved short-lived. The following day in Baku, Perez showed a rare case of mismanaging his tyres and soon had to move over, enabling Verstappen to sail by for what would become the win. Since then, the assumed competitive order has been restored and now a considerable swing would be required for Perez to pip his colleague, who is 57 points ahead in the championship table. Nevertheless, a point was made. Unlike previous occupiers of the second Red Bull seat, Perez had been briefly considered in the same breath as the Dutch ace.

Verstappen's rise to power markedly set back the grand prix careers of Daniil Kvyat, Pierre Gasly and Alex Albon. All three were relegated from the main team to either make room for Verstappen, or for not getting close enough to him and in turn letting nearest rival Mercedes have an easier ride on its way to consecutive constructors' championship spoils. Their toils prompted Red Bull in late 2020 to step outside its own driver pool for the first time in 13 years when it sought a more competitive replacement for Albon and hired ex-Racing Point pilot Perez. Like Mark Webber for 2007 following his stint at Williams, he was a free agent.

Two triumphs and nine other podiums later, Perez has a two-year contract extension with the Milton Keynes-based squad that will take him beyond his 34th birthday — something he amusingly let slip on his way to the principality podium when he bumped into team boss Christian Horner. "I probably signed too early," he joked in range of a

'RED BULL STEPPED OUTSIDE ITS DRIVER POOL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 13 YEARS'

microphone two days before the deal went public. Why is it then that it's Perez who has nailed down the second seat rather than the talent nurtured by the Red Bull Junior programme and its head Helmut Marko? Why has he been the one to end the Verstappen team-mate curse?

To fully recognise what Perez has got right to end the revolving door policy, first there must be an understanding of what his predecessors got wrong. In an issue of the *Red Bulletin* magazine that coincided with the Austrian GP earlier this month, Marko gave these assessments. Not one to mince his words, he reckoned Gasly "looked for excuses instead of tackling his own mistakes". He wonders if "very fast" Albon is "too nice… a bit like David Coulthard, who everyone likes but wasn't tough enough in the end". They were squaring up to Verstappen, who "is the »

RED BULL'S F1 DRIVERS

DRIVER	RB GP STARTS	YEARS
Mark Webber	129	2007-13
Max Verstappen	129	2016-present
Sebastian Vettel	113	2009-14
Daniel Ricciardo	100	2014-18
David Coulthard	71	2005-08
Sergio Perez	33	2021-present
Christian Klien	28	2005-06
Alex Albon	26	2019-20
Daniil Kvyat	21	2015-16
Pierre Gasly	12	2019
Vitantonio Liuzzi	4	2005
Robert Doornbos	3	2005

DUNBAR

FOX/GETTY IMAGES/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

Stepping up and beating the Ferrari challenge at Monaco back in May

Perez's first win of 2022 brought him to just six points off Leclerc

THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

AUTOSPORT

The race is on! Don't miss any of the action this season

WRC Rovanpera continues title march
AUTOSPORT
HOW PEREZ ENDED THE RED BULL CURSE
The challenge of being Max Verstappen's team-mate and why popular Perez has nailed it
'I want to beat Max, but I'm also Mr Happy because it's my team'
PLUS
Downpour causes Formula E chaos
Dixon equals Andretti's 52 Indycar wins
Le Mans and Azerbaijan
Ferrari disaster in
Verstappen gets his Azerbaijan
as Leclerc's challenge
...Toyota joy at Le Mans
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Marko feels that Gasly "looked for excuses" at Red Bull

fastest driver we've ever had. He's also gradually becoming the most complete racing driver. He is the type of generational talent you see once in a decade. That perfect combination of speed, performance and self-confidence is unique."

Against such a tough benchmark, Perez didn't hit the ground running. It took until a win inherited in round six of 2021 in Azerbaijan, after Verstappen's tyre blowout and Lewis Hamilton's restart brake error, for him to visit the podium. While he backed that up with third in the following round at Paul Ricard, only in the last seven races did he truly find a run of form. That stuttering start was underlined by a continuing weakness for ex-Sauber and McLaren driver Perez: he would often fail to maximise the car in qualifying. Aboard the 2021 Red Bull, this was made more critical by his struggles to pass slower cars. Too often, he was out of the lead battle. Even if victories weren't mandated, he wasn't as effective a lieutenant as Valtteri Bottas was proving at Mercedes.

Where Verstappen proved most devastating compared to his short-lived team-mates and in this early period against Perez was with his ability to master the lineage of Adrian Newey-designed high-rake racers. Verstappen is a driver who is at sea with understeer and, somewhat perversely, doesn't crave a balanced car either. Instead, Verstappen is happiest when he can absolutely rely on the front-axle to grip and then is more than able to tame the subsequent snappy rear.

By way of an instant comedown to earth after his promotion, Gasly discovered these spikey traits during a brutal 2019 pre-season test at Barcelona, when he binned the RB15 twice in four days. And while initially Verstappen and Albon both took trips to the gravel at the Spanish venue the following year in the even more unforgiving RB16, it was the Brit-Thai that fared much worse catching the rear in the long run.

Make no mistake, Perez was also hurt by the skittish characteristics. So much so, come mid-season 2021 he requested tweaks to neutralise the RB16B. He was then more comfortable, but he fell off the pace. As a result, he was soon pumping in the hours in the simulator, having learned the only meaningful way forward was to go along with Verstappen's set-up.

For this season, arguably the biggest regulatory overhaul in F1 history provided a reset point. Rake has largely been eliminated to best exploit ground-effects. This has helped level the playing field. Ex-Ferrari Driver Academy member Perez explains: "Last year's car was a great car, but it had a very unique driving style. You had to adapt to it. I managed to do so but it took me a while. I came [to the team] with no testing and straight into it in a [set of] regulations that have been there for a while. That was hard. Starting all from zero [for 2022], I think that's been quite helpful."

The RB18 certainly started the campaign with a much greater propensity for understeer than its forerunners — a characteristic only exaggerated by it struggling to meet the minimum dry car and driver weight limit of 798kg. That particularly helped Perez close the gap in qualifying, when the car was running with empty tanks to ensure the excess bulk contributed a greater percentage of its overall mass. All told, it allowed renowned tyre whisperer Perez to close the gap to his team-mate. This paid off most handsomely at tighter street circuits that promote washing wide. Perez outqualified Verstappen in Jeddah, Monaco and Baku, having proved particularly effective at agitating the front end to get it to answer to him. On show was the adaptable Perez »

HOW PEREZ FARED AGAINST HIS PREVIOUS F1 TEAM-MATES

Red Bull signed Sergio Perez to hold a candle to Max Verstappen – unquestionably the toughest benchmark from his 12 years in Formula 1. As for how he squared up against previous team-mates, where race results are concerned, the Mexican only beat one out of six: Lance Stroll 18-7 across 2019-20.

The championship standings comparison is much more favourable. On just three occasions did Perez finish behind a team-mate: 2011 (Kamui Kobayashi), 2013 (Jenson Button) and 2014 (Nico Hulkenberg). From 2015 until his 2021 Red Bull move, it was a clean sweep.

Kobayashi's strength lay with tidy race runs, leaving qualifying as the key battleground. Perez edged a narrow 11-7 in 2011 and then a tighter 11-9. It also shouldn't be forgotten that, late in 2012, Perez was error-prone after securing the McLaren seat for the following year. Upon moving to Woking, as a rule Button was ahead all campaign and Perez was hurt by his limited technical understanding aboard the mediocre MP4-28. It wasn't a downright bad term, but not enough to convince McLaren to retain him.

He rediscovered his form with a switch to Force India for 2014 (right). It was an uneven year, the first of three against Hulkenberg. While Perez would narrowly be considered the better of the pair from the first summer break onwards, Hulkenberg went on to win the overall qualifying head-to-head 34-24 (excluding sessions in which one had a car issue) as Perez seldom proved spectacular but was notably consistent. His stock continued to rise in 2017. Now established as one of the midfield's most reliable performers, he led the team alongside Esteban Ocon, albeit he was only marginally faster than the Frenchman and there were flashpoints thanks to collisions at Spa and Baku.

After Lawrence Stroll rescued the squad and rebadged it Racing Point, Lance Stroll came in for 2019. Perez crushed his boss's son and peaked with a maiden win in the 2020 Sakhir GP. Racing Point had triggered a break in Perez's contract to make room for Sebastian Vettel. Just as well that he recovered from a slow start to the season against Stroll in qualifying – the lingering weak spot – with his late form and enduring mastery of the rubber enough to make Red Bull pick up the phone.

Year alongside Button at McLaren was tricky

THE HEALTH OF THE RED BULL JUNIOR PROGRAMME

The Red Bull Junior programme has not long written its greatest success story. Max Verstappen was hired in August 2014 during his first season of car racing and straight away knew he would replace Jean-Eric Vergne at Toro Rosso the following year. In December 2021, he was crowned Formula 1 world champion. It's the one time Helmut Marko has presided over a driver from grand prix debut to coronation. Yet, seven months after Verstappen reached F1's summit, it's arguable that the Austrian junior scheme has rarely been less valued.

The struggles and demotions of Daniil Kvyat, Pierre Gasly and Alex Albon from Red Bull (plus Brendon Hartley at Toro Rosso) inspired a change of tack. In came established driver and free agent Sergio Perez for 2021. He was 31 and hadn't been associated with Red Bull since his teens.

His recent contract extension dictates that Gasly and the much less hotly tipped Yuki Tsunoda will be kept in a holding pattern at AlphaTauri. In F2, no one is obviously next in line. Juri Vips has lost his Red Bull F1 reserve gig and, while still on the books of the junior team, is damaged goods after using a racist slur. Jehan Daruvala sought McLaren to make his F1 testing debut, while Dennis Hauger (seventh in the points), Liam Lawson (10th), and Ayumu Iwasa (13th) are yet to seriously challenge for the title. The F3 undergraduates are Isack Hadjar, second in the points, and Jak Crawford in fourth. Jonny Edgar missed a couple of rounds of the campaign due to his battle with Crohn's disease.

Team boss Christian Horner is unsurprisingly flattering about the current health of the junior set-up: "We've got no shortage of talent coming through – all the way from karting, through the different formulas. That's always been a policy of Red Bull: to back youth and give opportunities to some of these kids that otherwise wouldn't have been able to progress."

But in the short term, there's no junior-level champion banging on the door to F1, no heir apparent who carries the fanfare of Alpine-affiliated hotshot Oscar Piastri. Nor do Gasly and Tsunoda appear set for a promotion. Verstappen, it seems, will remain the junior team posterchild for some time.

When will the next Red Bull junior reach Verstappen's level?

MAUGER

who garnered the plaudits in 2012 and 2016 most notably.

But so soon after Perez had hit his peak in Monaco and on the shores of the Caspian Sea, and with a new contract to show for it, he went off the boil. He shunted in a slippery qualifying session in Montreal and was notably not piling the pressure on the Ferraris at Silverstone and the Red Bull Ring. What should have been a top-four shootout for pole instead become a three-way tussle. This came after the RB18 gained an upgraded floor for the British GP, with Perez since admitting that the development curve has better suited the other side of the garage: "The development of the car has been... I haven't been as comfortable with it as I was in the beginning. Let's put it that way. I've got some work to do to understand what's going on."

Given Perez initially looked closer to Verstappen with the return of ground-effects, perhaps it is not the driver who has actively ended the second-seat jinx. Instead, maybe he has felt the benefit of good timing. As such, notwithstanding any car upgrades working in Verstappen's favour, how might Albon and Gasly be faring if they had their time again, only plying their trade with this new breed of machinery?

Now at Williams after his year on the sidelines testing for Red Bull, Albon suggests he might have got closer. "I quite enjoy these cars," he says. "I feel like they're a little bit more tricky to drive. Obviously, they're stiffer, they're lower, they move around a little bit more than previously. I enjoy that. I feel like it's a little bit more towards Formula 2, Formula 3 kind of driving. With comparisons between teams, it's very hard to say. But of course, I feel confident in the car, and I definitely feel more confident driving this car than I did the Red Bull."

Gasly, meanwhile, reckons his fate would still "depend on other factors" after he felt marginalised in the team, without equal tools to have a fair crack against Verstappen.

Perez has also given cause for Red Bull to extend his contract, or at least not a need to jettison him, because he is a team player. He fulfilled this part of the brief most famously in Abu Dhabi for the controversial 2021 title decider. Perez immediately slipped past Lando Norris for third to ensure he could play rear-gunner if required. Then, Red Bull left him out to retain track position when Hamilton and Verstappen pitted. He was operating under the instruction to "hold up Lewis... back him up", and the Mercedes did slipstream past, only for Perez to smartly cut back at the apex. That allowed Hamilton to get better drive out of the corner before the RB16B sailed back ahead with DRS to delay the seven-time champion through the fiddly final sector and onto the next lap. Verstappen closed to within view, Perez naturally letting him overtake without hesitation as part of the ultimate team game. "Checo is a legend," Verstappen acknowledged over the radio.

As Verstappen seized his maiden title, there was little debating the Red Bull driver pecking order that day and that season. But now in his second term at the team, Perez does feel more established, more comfortable calling the shots. "The longer you spend with a team, the better it gets," he says. "In many regards, just the confidence within the team, knowing the procedures, knowing how a team operates, how they think in terms of strategies, how they see the big picture. It's all about understanding the big picture, as a group, as a team. And certainly, guiding the direction of the car on my set-up, doing my own thing, it has helped me a lot."

While he has found his feet and his voice at Red Bull, Perez hasn't suddenly become bolshy to unduly jeopardise his position. In the Spanish GP, it was Verstappen who single-handedly threw himself off the road at Turn 4 to fall behind race leader Charles Leclerc and Perez. As part of Verstappen's recovery to the eventual win after the Ferrari expired, Perez was twice asked to move aside for his team-mate. This came with the promise from Red Bull that it would "pay you back later". It never did. The aggrieved driver's reply was simply: "That's very unfair, but OK." It was he who

Doing his bit for Verstappen against Hamilton in 2021 finale

MAUGER

‘WE TRY TO WIN AS A TEAM AND WORK TOGETHER. THAT’S WHY HE’S STAYING’

backed down and asked for any explanation to take place off-air and behind closed doors rather than get hot-headed and make a point about being very publicly established as the number two driver so early into the campaign. Just two races later, this time in Azerbaijan, again Perez was told to let Verstappen pass without a fight after allowing his tyre temperatures to drop too much under a virtual safety car. He diligently obliged, later saying: “It was the right call not to fight because I didn’t have any pace at the time and Max deserved to be ahead at that point.”

With internal friction kept to a minimum, in both races Perez brought up the rear in a Red Bull 1-2 — even if that had been twice decided by Ferrari engine explosions. Nevertheless, he hadn’t rocked the boat in order to preserve the “great relationship” with his stablemate. Crucially, he’d matched the underlying expectation that comes with the seat: get close to Verstappen to blunt rivals’ point-scoring as much as possible.

“I think we have a very good level of respect for each other,” says Perez, who knows all too well that delivering on the title dream he still harbours will necessarily entail beating Verstappen. “I want to beat Max. That’s no secret. But I also want the whole Red Bull team to do great. Max wins are not great for my championship hopes. But at the end of the day, I’m Mr Happy because it’s my team. The competition is only increasing. So, it’s important to keep pushing hard and keep going forwards.”

The competition this year is headed by Ferrari. As such, while the 2021 comparison was with Bottas, this season Perez must be assessed against the job Carlos Sainz is doing in the shadow of Leclerc. Former Toro Rosso driver Sainz didn’t enjoy a similarly smooth transition to ground-effects as he struggled to tame the unpredictable F1-75. While that began with being a touch adrift of Leclerc in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, the Spaniard then fired himself into the gravel to retire in Australia before being punted off at Imola. And there, on Ferrari home soil, Perez again met Marko’s expectations perfectly. Not only did he finish second in a Red Bull 1-2 but, by having track position over Leclerc, he led the chasing Monegasque to overdrive and force himself into a spin to bleed away further points.

It’s displays of this type that have convinced Red Bull to retain Perez. Not only that, but unlike the top-team tenures of Gasly and Albon, there never seemed to be serious doubt hanging over his position. “[I think they kept me] because of the work I do for the team,” reckons Perez, who had considerably more F1 experience than his predecessors when he arrived at Red Bull. “It’s the work I do behind the scenes, it’s what I delivered on track. At the end of the day, the team has all the information. Red Bull is in a privileged position, they can have any driver they want… well, they can have a lot of drivers because Red Bull will be attractive for pretty much anyone. They have all the data, they have their junior drivers. At the end of the day, there’s a reason why I’m here.”

Verstappen adds: “What is important to the team is that both cars are scoring solid points and that’s what we’re doing. So, I think it was quite a straightforward decision to give Checo another contract. It’s been really enjoyable working with him. We have a good time on and off-track and that’s also very important to a team that there are no heated moments. We all try to win the race but at the end of the day, also we try to win as a team and work together and I think we’ve been doing that really well. That’s why he is staying.”

It might have been Verstappen’s exceptional talent and his particular car demands that created the problem over who should have the second Red Bull seat. But finally, after much trial and error, it seems that Perez is the solution.

Good relationship with Verstappen has helped Perez at Red Bull

TEE

Vast array of windows bathes service area in light

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT GMBH/FABIEN DUFOUR

Space for photo ops and media interviews

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT GMBH/AUSTRAL

INSIDE HYUNDAI'S F1-SPEC MOBILE WRC HOME

One of the World Rally Championship big guns invited Autosport for a behind-the-scenes look at its brand-new travelling facility... and it's quite something

TOM HOWARD

Hyundai's glittering new mobile home from home takes four to five days to build, but just two to disassemble

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT GMBH/ROMAIN THUILLIER

The World Rally Championship is a travelling circus and unlike circuit racing, where teams work out of pit garages, WRC operations are required to set up camp in temporarily constructed service parks.

In Formula 1, teams are equipped with glamorous multi-floor temporary structures that pop up in paddocks to house their staff and an ever-growing guest list. The WRC is no different, with top teams Toyota, Hyundai and M-Sport Ford all operating out of their own brand of impressive peripatetic structures.

To run a fleet of world rally cars sufficiently, teams need to build a workshop facility at every round of the championship, before thoughts can turn to the actual event. This is required to provide an area for the mechanics and team personnel to service and manage the cars, while also entertaining sponsors and guests. In the not-too-distant past, WRC teams would have operated out of tents and trucks, but today the game has changed, with top manufacturers using luxurious temporary buildings. And this year, Hyundai Motorsport has stepped up its service park game with an all-new structure that travels to all European rounds of the championship.

At two stories high, covering 220 square metres, furnished with

"IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT PAST, TEAMS WOULD HAVE OPERATED OUT OF TENTS AND TRUCKS"

floor-to-ceiling windows, bordered by sky blue and orange factory-coloured cladding, Hyundai's service park home from home is an imposing structure that towers over its rivals. It's easy to find where this team is located in the service park.

It's an eyecatching piece of engineering that not only provides the team with a place to manage its WRC operation at rallies, but acts as a huge marketing tool to showcase the Hyundai marque and its commitment to the series. From the outside, it may seem excessive but, after scratching the surface, the necessity for its vastness is easily explained.

You could be fooled into thinking that this is a permanent building, but this is far from the truth. Although the competitive component of WRC events begins most often on Thursdays, construction of Hyundai's service park structure starts a week before the rally. This can take up to five days to build depending »

Thierry Neuville preps for Sardinia shakedown

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT GMBH/FABIEN DUFOUR

Engineers are now up close with the cars

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT GMBH/FABIEN DUFOUR

on the service park terrain and the weather conditions, such is the complexity and detail put into this construction.

Arguably the most important section is the area that houses the cars to be prepared and worked on during the rally. There is ample room for mechanics and engineers to work on the three i20 Ns. The high ceiling and array of windows creates a perfectly lit arena, providing an ideal environment for mechanics to complete the required work on the vehicles, which access the building through sliding garage doors located on the front.

While the significant use of glass windows maximises the amount of natural light for the mechanics to work under, it also provides fans with an opportunity to watch the team work on the cars while offering further ease of access to the drivers.

Adjacent to the service area is the engineering office, which has moved into this new expansive service bay area for 2022, having been originally housed in one of the team's transporters. The theory behind the move is to ensure that the engineers are in a closer proximity to the cars, thus improving communication between them and the mechanics.

"It's a brand-new facility that we introduced in Monte Carlo [in January] this year," Hyundai deputy team director Julien Moncet explains. "It's quite different from the one we were using last year. It takes four to five days to assemble, but to disassemble it takes only two days.

"Now, this year, the service part is on just the one floor where we do all the maintenance service and so on. Then next to that is the engineering room and this is quite new, as we used to be in the truck behind. The site is about 220 square metres."

Moving from the service bay, there's an impressive reception area with outside seating that leads to a two-floored section of the building, which includes a balcony on the upper floor, overlooking the service park. It is in this part of the structure where Hyundai welcomes its VIP guests and hosts media interviews with the drivers in a cleanly laid-out environment furnished with tables and chairs. This area is also where team personnel can eat, drink and relax in the limited quiet moments during a rally.

Upstairs houses a suite of offices for the team's senior management where top-level meetings are conducted and key

Glossy new edifice is statement of intent, but team must still deliver on the stages

MCKLEIN

Top-notch catering ensures a well-fed team is a happy team

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT

Ice cream options are a big hit with guests

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT

decision are made. This section of the building also features a bespoke office for Hyundai Motorsport president Sean Kim for when the South Korean marque's boss attends WRC rounds.

Behind the structure is an array of tents and trucks that act as an inventory of spare parts from bodywork to mechanical components, such as gearboxes and dampers. One tent is filled with Hyundai's allocation of wheels and tyres that are all primed and ready to tackle the stages.

Key to the operation of any motorsport team is ensuring its troops are fed and watered sufficiently. This is perhaps even more important in rallying, given the length of days that mechanics, engineers, drivers, co-drivers and other team personnel are required to work. The service park is lived in much more than hotel rooms during the event, since days often begin in the early hours of the morning and finish late into the night, depending on the outcome of the action on the stages.

In the catering department Hyundai has spared no expense — the facility is equipped with its own kitchen and bakery, operated by four chefs. The kitchen features a huge stove, ovens, two chest freezers and a pantry equivalent to the size found in most household kitchens. It is here where luxury pastries and gourmet meals for personnel and guests, using ingredients mostly imported from Italy, are carefully prepared.

"It is very good food and we have very good catering, and that is very important," says Moncet. "We are spending a lot of time here in this facility, we are working day and night. I think it's very important for the team and the atmosphere to have good food, and they do really incredible food here."

To top off these culinary delights, there is a choice of three types of ice cream available 24/7 (pistachio, hazelnut and coffee flavours were on offer for Rally Portugal in May), which have proven to be a particular favourite among guests. "I do not eat ice cream myself, so I cannot say much about that, but we do have some people that visit us just for the ice cream," adds Moncet.

While Moncet is happy to joke about the team's popular frozen desserts, all of these features — from the large windows that provide so much light in the service area, through the connecting engineering office, to the hospitality and top-quality catering — create the ideal environment for the team to work, offering Hyundai the best chance for results on the road.

"For sure it is really important to feel comfortable in your working area as the mechanics will be spending quite some hours in it," he says. "We have a lot of light and a lot of space, which is more than enough for three cars. It is important to have the engineers next to the cars as that improves the communication even if sometimes it is noisy with the noise from the car. We are really happy to have this new facility this year."

"IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE ENGINEERS NEXT TO THE CARS AS THAT IMPROVES COMMUNICATION"

Moncet stresses importance of a high-quality working environment

McKLEIN

Hyundai isn't the only WRC team with an impressive service park facility. Rival Toyota operates from a single-floor temporary structure that has expanded this year to cater for five cars. Meanwhile, M-Sport Ford constructs its own home from home using modified shipping containers and large inflatable marquees to create a clear visible presence.

While Hyundai appears to be winning the service park facility arms race, Moncet has downplayed suggestions that there is any competition among teams over their structures, stressing that winning rallies remains the main objective. "There is not this kind of competition," he says. "The most important thing is still to win the rally on the Sunday, for sure it is a marketing tool to show the commitment of the brand."

He then adds with a cheeky grin: "Honestly there is no competition, ours is much better anyway."

Visit autosport.com for a behind-the-scenes video tour of Hyundai's service park structure: ***autosport.com/wrc/news/video-how-hyundai-prepares-for-a-wrc-event/10326660/***

RACE CENTRE

Brilliant Rovanpera continues to pull up trees

The WRC's youngest event winner in history is looking ever more likely to become its youngest champion too

TOM HOWARD

PHOTOGRAPHY **McKLEIN**

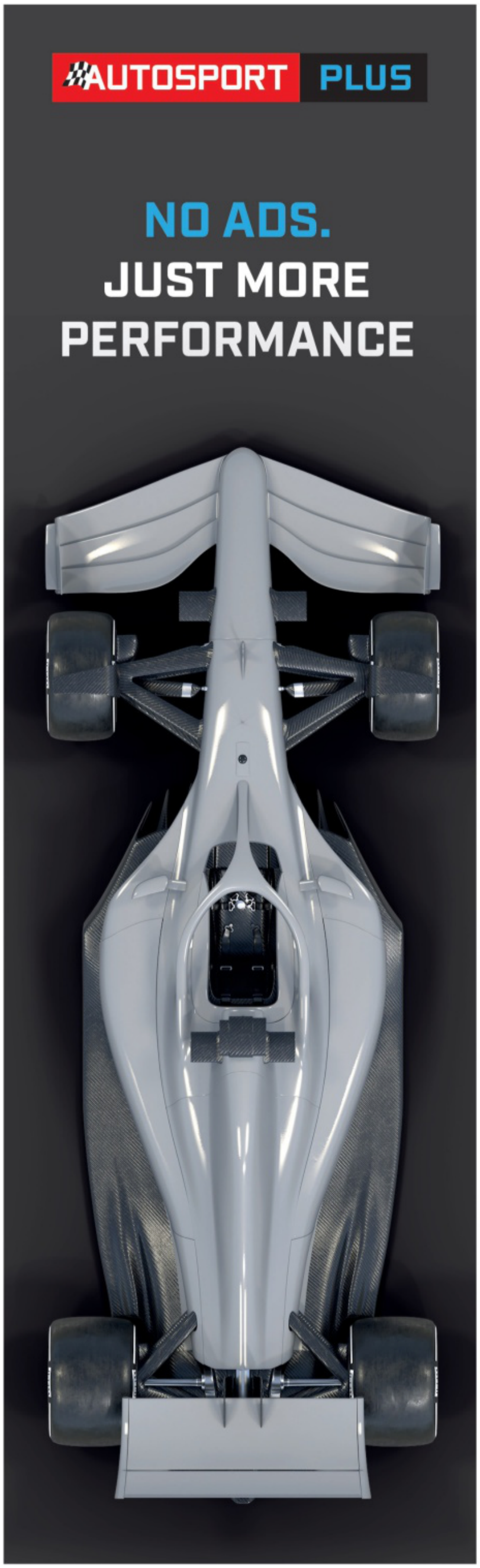
If the World Rally Championship had its own dictionary, then Kalle Rovanpera's crushing victory last weekend at Rally Estonia would be epitomised as the definition of 'masterclass'. The new flying Finn is enjoying an extraordinary run of form, defying belief by the relative ease displayed in overcoming the toughest challenges the WRC can muster. Estonia's turbulent weather did its level best to make life as difficult as possible, but a glimpse inside the Rovanpera Toyota cockpit and the timing screen would have you believe that this was an everyday drive. Last weekend's fifth win from seven events this year even left his Toyota boss Jari-Matti Latvala lost for words to explain how this 21-year-old, who he's already described as a "miracle kid", is able to drive at a level his contemporaries appear unable to reach.

It was perhaps poignant that the latest round of the WRC, which is fast becoming the Kalle Rovanpera Show, arrived at Rally Estonia, the epicentre of his rapid rise to the forefront of rallying's top tier. It has been 12 months since that breakthrough win on Estonian gravel, where a new youngest-ever WRC winner was crowned. Since that moment the floodgates have opened. Rovanpera has clinched seven of the past 13 rallies, winning in Greece (2021) followed by triumphs this term in Sweden, Croatia, Portugal, Kenya and now Estonia in what appears to be an unassailable charge to become the youngest WRC champion of all time.

Fresh from conquering the brutal Safari Rally, a victory Rovanpera confessed was his "hardest yet", you would have got short odds on another win in Estonia. But, this being Ott Tanak country, the four-time Rally Estonia winner would be hard to beat if his fast-but-fragile Hyundai could perform. Come the ceremonial start, the rally-mad Estonians flocked to host city Tartu and it was clear that Tanak would have the equivalent of a 12th man in football, as he received a rock-star reception from thousands of airhorn-armed supporters. Arguably Estonia's most famous sports personality, he downplayed this: "I'm far from a rock star, I know nothing about rock."

Introductions over, Rally Estonia was to largely follow a script that is becoming increasingly familiar, although it was M-Sport's Craig Breen who created the early headlines by winning Thursday night's super special to remind the locals that the second-place finisher from the past two years was a genuine contender in his Ford Puma.

Breen's moment in the limelight was fleeting, with his victory »



hopes dashed by stage four on Friday. That was when he was caught out by a medium-speed left-hander while in contention with the frontrunners. Broken front suspension spelled an early end to the day. "Unfortunately at the corner, and I don't know how many times I have done the corner over the years in that direction, under braking I just got caught out," related Breen. "It would have been a nothing accident but in the grass was a big concrete post."

Friday morning would belong to Toyota as the marque gave its debut to an upgraded engine and rear wing, designed to combat Hyundai's superior top-end speed. It was the GR Yaris of Elfyn Evans that won all four morning stages, including the rally's longest, which featured a huge man-made crest and drop that Tanak described as like "a ski resort for rally cars". Evans opened up a 12.5s lead over Tanak, while roadsweeper Rovanpera sat third, admitting he was "lucky" after hitting a rock with his right-rear wheel.

Hyundai had been quietly optimistic that it could challenge for the win in Estonia, given its pace on smooth gravel. While the all-too-familiar reliability issues stayed away, it became clear that the i20 N didn't have the performance or rear stability to fight the Toyotas, as Tanak, Thierry Neuville and Oliver Solberg had to wrestle their cars through the stages. The Swede suffered a wild 360-degree spin battling to find grip and lost even more time to a stall. "I am driving very hard, but it's more like fighting and not driving very fast," said Tanak, who would then receive a 10s penalty for failing to engage electric-only mode during a designated EV zone on Thursday night. That dropped him to third, elevating Rovanpera to second behind Evans. Neuville added: "We made

Evans could not match team-mate, but took second

Rovanpera and co-driver Halttunen with some very swirly trophies

"It would have been a nothing accident but in the grass was a big concrete post"

some changes, but I was fighting a lot to keep it straight."

There was also an issue for one of the Toyotas — Esapekka Lappi was struggling with the brakes on his GR Yaris, and that left him almost a minute adrift: "I need to change my driving style completely to try to manage. When you left-foot brake, you have nothing."

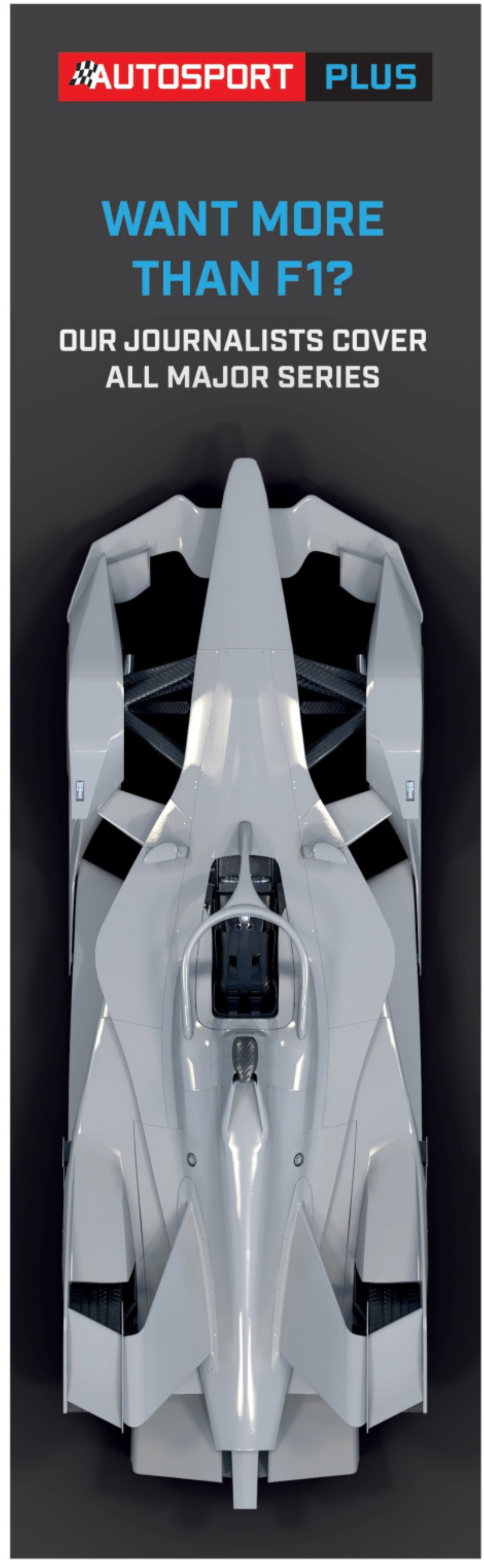
The service park expected rain to dominate Friday, but its arrival was delayed until the afternoon, where it would wreak havoc. Sudden intermittent heavy downpours created unpredictable and extremely slippery conditions, and this would prove to be a factor in deciding the rally.

Evans claimed a fifth stage win to start the loop to lead by 19.9s, but when the rain started to fall Rovanpera began to chip away, taking nine seconds back courtesy of two stage wins, before pulling off what is becoming his party trick. The rain intensified for the final stage of the day and, knowing the conditions would worsen for the later runners, Rovanpera elected to push. The result was a 22.6s swing as Evans faced the heaviest of the rain, and was lucky to survive a "fair moment" with the bushes. "The weather on the last stage was on our side," admitted Rovanpera.

It was a move Rovanpera had executed when rain arrived in Portugal and Kenya, and he pulled away from Evans, showcasing his incredible feel for extreme conditions. It wasn't the last time this stunt would be pulled.

As the rain hammered down, chaos ensued when Lappi and the M-Sport duo of Gus Greensmith and Pierre-Louis Loubet were all caught out at the same section. Loubet, who had been sitting in sixth, struggled for grip following a jump landing and rolled onto his side after hitting a bank. Luckily spectators rushed to right the Puma, but two minutes were lost. Lappi and Greensmith both ran wide but were able to recover. Tanak also suffered a wild moment caused by a misted-up windscreen when a heating trunking pipe disconnected itself, prompting quick-thinking co-driver Martin Jarveoja to prop up the pipe with his left foot while reading the pacenotes.

Once the field returned to service, Rovanpera held an 11.7s lead over Evans, with Tanak 44.3s adrift in third ahead of the recovering Lappi and Neuville, who had already conceded the fight. "I have no confidence in the car," grimaced the Belgian. "I do not trust, and »



I know I cannot fight with the guys at the front this weekend. I have to stay clever and try to bring the car home." To compound Hyundai's lack of pace, Solberg fell way down the order after losing his power-steering following contact with a rock. It resulted in a three-minute penalty for checking into stage eight 19 minutes late.

The changeable sunshine and rain showers continued into Saturday, when Rovanpera stamped his authority on the event. Evans briefly took a 0.6s nibble out of the Finn's lead after winning stage 10. Rovanpera said he wasn't "awake" in the test, but it proved to be the required alarm call, sparking a run of seven consecutive stage wins and effectively ending Evans's victory hopes. "Realistically, now there's quite a big gap," said Evans. "In this rally you need to be consistently chipping in the times and to be fair to Kalle, I've had no answer this afternoon — and even all day."

Despite surging into a 29.1s lead, Rovanpera was typically understated: "I felt we were driving well and pushing quite hard all the time, but still managing the risk a bit and not pushing in the rough places. I think we did quite well."

While Tanak had all but given up to focus on securing third, team-mate Neuville moved to fourth when Lappi knocked a tyre off its rim following an awkward landing from a jump. A similar fate befell Greensmith, dropping the pair down the order.

Solberg's eventful rally continued as he produced one of the saves of the season when his i20 N flicked sideways over a jump. Somehow he wrestled the tree-bound car back. It prompted the return of Solberg's "this is proper rallying" Safari Rally catchphrase. The heroics deserved a reward, and it so nearly came in the form of a maiden WRC stage win, but he was denied by 0.1s by M-Sport's Adrien Fourmaux on Saturday's final stage.

The Estonian clouds had one last downpour to coincide with the rally-ending powerstage, creating conditions Lappi described as the "craziest stage he'd ever driven", such was the combination of mud, ruts and standing water. With the win in the bag there was no need for Rovanpera to push. But that instruction doesn't appear to be in his vocabulary, especially when there are bonus points up for grabs. And so an extraordinary display was capped off by a mindblowing yet nerve-jangling run for the onlooking Toyota team bosses. The result was a 14th stage win by a whopping 22.5s from Evans to claim victory by more than a minute.

Breen was on form early on before hitting a concealed post

"The powerstage was a big push from us," said a jubilant Rovanpera. "I saw that in this weather you can make some differences and I tried to push a bit and still be a bit safe. I was enjoying the driving. There was no talk [with the team] at all. We just decided to go for it."

Tanak delivered his fans a podium in third, but the frustration was clear to see. His weekend ended with a €4000 fine for failing to wear a Pirelli cap on the podium. "For the first time in my life, I have not been competitive in Estonia, so that's a bit frustrating," he said. "It's unfortunately the situation we are in — we did everything we could, but third place feels disappointing. There are many fundamental things that didn't go right [during the car's development], and now we are having to progress them as we go."

Neuville salvaged fourth to remain Rovanpera's nearest championship rival, albeit 83 points adrift, while Takamoto Katsuta recovered from a roll in shakedown to net fifth in his Toyota ahead of Lappi, who denied Fourmaux sixth on the final stage. M-Sport's difficult rally was compounded by retirements for Loubet and Greensmith on the final day.

After yet another dominant display from Rovanpera, it appears that he has one hand on a record-breaking title with six events remaining. To make matters worse for his rivals, next up is his home round in Finland.

"In this weather you can make some differences. I tried to push a bit and still be a bit safe"

Tanak ski-jumps his way to third place in Hyundai

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LATVALA HEAPS PRAISE ON HIS YOUNG STAR

Kalle Rovanpera was "on another planet" on his way to a dominant Rally Estonia victory, according to Toyota World Rally Championship boss Jari-Matti Latvala.

Reflecting on Rovanpera's win, Latvala admitted that he's at a loss to explain how his driver is able to deliver such performances, and believes he is firmly on course to become the youngest-ever world champion. Should Rovanpera achieve that feat, he would eclipse the record held by Colin McRae, who was 27 years old when he lifted the crown in 1995.

"I don't have any more words to say with the surprises Kalle is bringing to us," said Latvala. "Once again when the conditions are getting difficult and extreme, Kalle is phenomenal. I don't know where it is coming from, he is on another planet when the conditions are difficult. If he keeps going like this it's just a matter of time when he wins the championship.

"But we have to remember in the past we have seen championships that have been lost at the very end when it has been looking like they are won in the mid-season. We still need to be realistic. He doesn't need to win the events anymore to secure the championship, so he has all the tools in his hands."

When asked how he has been able to achieve this run of form, Rovanpera said: "Of course the first win is always more special, but I think since last year we have got a lot more experience and we can be more comfortable in the car and manage the situations a bit better. The feeling of course is really, really good. It was an amazing result this weekend. We started first car on the road and basically the Friday morning loop was the only loop we couldn't match the pace, but after that we were in the fight all of the time and managing it really well."

RESULTS ROUND 7/13, RALLY ESTONIA, JULY 14-17

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Kalle Rovanpera** (FIN) **Jonne Halttunen** (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	2h54m29.0s
2	**Elfyn Evans** (GBR) **Scott Martin** (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1m00.9s
3	**Ott Tanak** (EST) **Martin Jarveoja** (EST)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+1m55.7s
4	**Thierry Neuville** (BEL) **Martijn Wydaeghe** (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+3m53.3s
5	**Takamoto Katsuta** (JPN) **Aaron Johnston** (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT NG / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+4m13.4s
6	**Esapekka Lappi** (FIN) **Janne Ferm** (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+4m49.1s
7	**Adrien Fourmaux** (FRA) **Alexandre Coria** (FRA)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+5m09.2s
8	**Andreas Mikkelsen** (NOR) **Torstein Eriksen** (NOR)	Toksport WRT / Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo	+11m01.8s
9	**Teemu Suninen** (FIN) **Mikko Markkula** (FIN)	Hyundai Motorsport N / Hyundai i20 N Rally2	+11m27.1s
10	**Emil Lindholm** (FIN) **Reeta Hamalainen** (FIN)	Toksport WRT 2 / Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo	+13m04.8s
OTHERS			
13	**Oliver Solberg** (SWE) **Elliott Edmondson** (GBR)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+16m12.0s
30	**Craig Breen** (IRL) **Paul Nagle** (IRL)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+1h05m40.2s
R	**Gus Greensmith** (GBR) **Jonas Andersson** (SWE)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	SS21-transmission
R	**Pierre-Louis Loubet** (FRA)/**Vincent Landais** (FRA)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	SS20-accident/suspension

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 **ERM 1** (1.03 miles)	Breen 1m38.7s	**Breen**	Rovanpera +0.1s
SS2 **Peipisaare 1** (15.13 miles)	Evans 13m24.7s	**Evans**	Rovanpera +7.8s
SS3 **Mustvee 1** (10.62 miles)	Evans 8m57.2s	**Evans**	Rovanpera +12.6s
SS4 **Raanitsa 1** (13.33 miles)	Evans 10m18.5s	**Evans**	Rovanpera +16.9s
SS5 **Vastsemoisa 1** (4.16 miles)	Evans 4m16.8s	**Evans**	Rovanpera +18.7s
SS6 **Peipisaare 2** (15.13 miles)	Evans 13m37.5s	**Evans**	Rovanpera +19.9s
SS7 **Mustvee 2** (10.62 miles)	Rovanpera 8m58.6s	**Evans**	Rovanpera +14.4s
SS8 **Raanitsa 2** (13.33 miles)	Rovanpera 10m24.4s	**Evans**	Rovanpera +10.9s
SS9 **Vastsemoisa 2** (4.16 miles)	Rovanpera 4m23.2s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +11.7s
SS10 **Elva 1** (7.29 miles)	Evans 5m57.2s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +11.1s
SS11 **Maekula 1** (6.38 miles)	Rovanpera 5m48.1s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +11.5s
SS12 **Otepaa 1** (10.61 miles)	Rovanpera 8m30.5s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +15.7s
SS13 **Neeruti 1** (4.84 miles)	Rovanpera 4m38.9s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +19.1s
SS14 **Elva 2** (7.29 miles)	Rovanpera 5m57.5s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +22.4s
SS15 **Maekula 2** (6.38 miles)	Rovanpera 5m43.6s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +25.9s
SS16 **Otepaa 2** (10.61 miles)	Rovanpera 8m34.9s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +29.4s
SS17 **Neeruti 2** (4.84 miles)	Rovanpera 4m41.4s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +29.5s
SS18 **ERM 2** (1.03 miles)	Fourmaux 1m39.8s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +29.1s
SS19 **Raadi 1** (4.09 miles)	Rovanpera 5m41.5s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +29.8s
SS20 **Kanepi 1** (10.24 miles)	Tanak and Rovanpera 8m09.6s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +38.8s
SS21 **Kambja 1** (9.91 miles)	Rovanpera 8m48.8s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +40.8s
SS22 **Raadi 2** (4.09 miles)	Lappi 5m38.7s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +40.0s
SS23 **Kanepi 2** (10.24 miles)	Lappi 8m16.4s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +38.4s
SS24 **Kambja 2** (Power Stage) (9.91 miles)	Rovanpera 9m18.2s	**Rovanpera**	Evans +1m00.9s

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Rovanpera 175**; 2 **Neuville** 92; 3 **Evans** 79; 4 **Tanak** 77; 5 **Katsuta** 73; 6 **Breen** 60; 7 **Sebastien Loeb** 35; 8 **Sebastien Ogier** 34; 9 **Dani Sordo** 34; 10 **Greensmith** 28.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP
1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 298; 2 **Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT** 211; 3 **M-Sport Ford WRT** 157; 4 **Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT NG** 80.

NEXT REPORT

RALLY FINLAND
11 AUGUST ISSUE

Cassidy (green car), Vandoorne (left) and di Grassi (right) ended up in a crumpled heap

BAGNALL

FORMULA E NEW YORK

Cassidy gets crunching in the Big Apple

A sudden downpour put the long-time leader in the wall, but the red flag saved the Kiwi's skin for a maiden Formula E victory

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

During the pre-weekend Jakarta press conference early last month, Nick Cassidy's sense of irony was the only thing that remained dry amid the typically humid climate in Indonesia. "It's actually my first press conference this year, which says something about my season," he quipped, unaware that his season was going to become even more fraught that weekend and at the following race in Marrakech. As a team, Envision's lean period had begun with mixed fortunes the previous time out in Berlin. So the British squad, usually so competitive in New York City, needed to tap into that form for a confidence boost at Formula E's outing in Brooklyn.

Owing to the pandemic and a busy racing schedule, Kiwi Cassidy had hardly seen his parents during the past three years. Mr and Mrs C therefore jetted to New York to spend some of the week with their son, taking in the sights together. But they weren't prepared for the spectacle that he treated them to on Saturday afternoon, when a "wall" of water contrived to throw the race into chaos.

Although the brutality of a sudden downpour had its part to play in the race, a lighter peppering of precipitation added more variation to a Formula E grid order that's arguably starting to settle under the new duels format. The rain waited for Group B to emerge, with Group A interrupted by a red flag instigated by Sergio Sette Camara, who strayed onto the wrong side of the limit and threw his Dragon Penske into the Turn 14 exit wall. By the end, Edoardo Mortara was on the wrong side of the cut-off after getting dumped into fifth by a late effort from Sebastien Buemi. Cassidy and his team-mate Robin Frijns both progressed, as did Stoffel Vandoorne.

To sweeten the pill for Mortara, title rivals Jean-Eric Vergne and Mitch Evans were caught out by the rain and this resulted in lowly grid slots for the pair of them. But Venturi, Mortara's team, at least had one horse in the pole race in the form of Lucas di Grassi, joined from Group B by Pascal Wehrlein, Sam Bird and Alexander Sims.

But the true duel for pole proved to be a battle between two picks from Group A — Cassidy beat Bird and Wehrlein respectively to pass to the final, while the Mercedes of Vandoorne cleared Sims and di Grassi. And while Vandoorne was close to overturning the 0.152-second advantage Cassidy's Envision Audi built in sector one, the New Zealander claimed the spoils — and a start on the advantageous side of the grid.

The cleaner track surface on the odd-numbered grid slots »

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FERRARO

Frijns (left) was leading when reds flew, but win went to Cassidy (right)

helped Cassidy get a far better launch into Turn 1 than Vandoorne, who lost positions to both di Grassi (starting third) and Buemi (fifth) at the start. Although Cassidy pointed his car in anticipation of cutting across Vandoorne's bow, he could simply scamper off into the lead and start gapping di Grassi. When he picked up attack mode on lap seven, Cassidy allowed the Brazilian to take the lead for a lap, but di Grassi responded a lap later to restore the status quo.

Di Grassi described the early phases of the race as "non-eventful" as Cassidy looked to be controlling the lead with consummate ease. Their second attack mode activations effectively played out the same — Cassidy took his final dose on lap 18, di Grassi on lap 19, and thus preserved their positions. In fact, the Envision driver was able to extend his lead when both were on 250kW power, but di Grassi trimmed it back after Cassidy hit the end of his four minutes.

Then, di Grassi launched an assault with his fanboost activation, but Cassidy closed him off, perhaps in defiance against one of Formula E's more controversial gimmicks. But that handed an opportunity to the chasing Vandoorne, who had made up for his early descent with his own well-judged attack modes. The Belgian also had fanboost to burn and stuffed his Mercedes past di Grassi to reclaim the runner-up spot on lap 24.

Three tours later, the drizzle entered from stage left. At around the same time, Vandoorne got mobbed at Turn 1 by di Grassi and Frijns; the 2016-17 champion opened the door into the corner, and Frijns walked right through it to get two Envision machines within the podium places. And it proved to be at the right time.

Evans got a podium on Sunday, but felt he should have had more

STALEY

"It feels really good. It's not quite the way we would have liked, but I'm definitely going to take it"

Rolling clouds from Manhattan drifted southwards across the East River, dumping rain all over Brooklyn's Red Hook district. The circuit immediately teemed with puddles; although the Formula E cars sport the customary all-weather tyres, wear had rendered them relatively ineffective at dealing with standing water. Cassidy had been in cruise control, but then aquaplaned into the Turn 6 barrier and sustained heavy damage. Di Grassi followed him in, as did Vandoorne, but Frijns hit the brakes sooner to make it through the corner.

"When we were heading to Turn 6 we basically saw a wall of rain, and I think everybody braked early," Frijns explained. "But as soon as Lucas in front of me drove into that rain wall, I didn't see anything anymore because of the spray that was coming out of his car. So I braked really early."

Incidents then ensued between Buemi, Wehrlein, Bird and Jake Dennis, prompting a red flag, with Frijns in the lead. But race control made the call not to restart the race, cycling the order back to the end of lap 29, and granting the Dutchman's team-mate Cassidy his first FE win. "It feels really good — it's not quite the way that we would have liked, but I'm definitely going to take it," Cassidy reflected. "I've had some weekends in this championship where I'm very competitive, and it's not really worked out. And today's quite the opposite. I'm pretty thankful."

It was a bittersweet scenario for the Envision mechanics, however, as they then had to produce extensive rebuilds with a new tub for Cassidy to race on the second day. But the work paid off; Cassidy collected a second successive pole after seeing off DS Techeetah driver Antonio Felix da Costa in Sunday's final duel and was ready to contend for a second win on the trot.

But in preparing a new car for race two, Cassidy had to take a new battery pack — and therefore, he was slapped with a 30-place grid penalty by the FIA. He didn't know about the penalty until he was told live on TV after qualifying... »

Da Costa leads Sims on his way to victory in the second race

GALLOWAY

Da Costa was therefore shuffled up to pole, with Alexander Sims enjoying a terrific qualifying in his Mahindra to join him on the front row. The Portuguese, who had only secured his first podium of the year last time out in Marrakech, was itching for his first win since Monaco 2021. He promised that he'd have champagne on Sunday — and he lived up to that promise.

Da Costa kept the lead from Sims at the start, and built enough of a buffer to ensure that the Briton couldn't try a move during the opening half of the race. Sims then came under heavy pressure from Vandoorne, and the Mercedes driver made the pass on lap 22 to shuffle up to second. The Belgian proved to be much more of a threat to da Costa breaking his lean spell, closing up but with few opportunities for a move.

"I had one eye forwards, one eye backwards, which sucks!" da Costa reflected. "These guys were on my tail the whole way and that just takes so much out of you. My car was good but hard to drive. It was super-pointy on the front and I just had to be so focused to not lose the rear on entry. And when it's like that, it was physical. I don't know if I'm getting old or what! I trained a lot, but it still felt like it was hard."

Vandoorne threw everything but the kitchen sink at da Costa, including an attempted move with fanboost, but the DS Techeetah driver saw him coming and was able to stay out of arm's reach. And, crossing the line with 0.0% left on the energy meter, da Costa concluded an expertly judged race with victory in his pocket. Although he's faced a difficult year, da Costa admitted that he'd enjoyed the struggle to try to turn his results around. "I'm just super-happy with that," he grinned. "We've had a very, very difficult start to the year. It's been a struggle. But I do love it. I love the struggle. I love coming out of difficult moments. I love bringing my team up with me and to have them all on the podium today. It's an awesome feeling."

"We've had a very difficult start to the year. It's been a struggle. But I love it. I love the struggle"

If it wasn't wet enough on Saturday, da Costa did this after Sunday win

BAGNALL

Vandoorne's second place lifted him back into the lead of the championship by 11 points over Mortara — the Venturi Mercedes driver was unable to set a qualifying time owing to a brake-by-wire issue, and had to recover from 21st on the grid. He made it into 10th, perhaps helped by a late Turn 6 skirmish between di Grassi and a below-par Vergne ahead, to lessen the damage.

Evans completed the top three, denying Sims a first trip to the podium of the year, but the Jaguar driver reckoned he'd had the pace to secure victory had he not been caught up in a volatile battle with Nyck de Vries's Mercedes earlier in the race. Evans was unimpressed by reigning champion de Vries's "stupid" dive down the inside into Turn 10, which resulted in contact with Evans and Sims, and in trying to recover the position the Jag ran over a bump on the run to Turn 6. The bump completely unsettled the Aucklander's car, forcing him to pull out a save worthy of a World Cup penalty shootout.

"I think we could have won today — I never say that lightly, we had a good car today," Evans remarked. "I hit the pothole on the back straight on the braking zone — unlucky to hit it but to get away with it was very lucky. I shat myself, had huge flat spots, tried to gather it up and lost a lot of time, and it took at least a few laps for everything to settle down again."

With New York City looking doubtful for next season — renovation works are expected at the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal — Formula E is searching for a new US venue. If it's the last time we meet Brooklyn in a racing capacity, the two races were a fitting swansong for the championship's stay in the Big Apple. Only London and Seoul remain, with two races apiece, and the title battle is as spicy as it ever was. Vandoorne has the whip hand for now — but that could all change once more in a thrilling exhibition at the ExCeL.

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IN THE HEADLINES

NO RESTART WAS 'WRONG'

Both Jaguar drivers disagreed with the call not to restart race one, particularly as Mitch Evans sat third at the red flag. "I think it was completely the wrong call – just have the safety car for a few laps, and sort of just scout out the situation in the conditions," said the Kiwi. Sam Bird pointed out half an hour after the stoppage that the track was now dry.

CASSIDY RUES PENALTY

Race one winner Nick Cassidy was left to rue his 30-place grid penalty, disagreeing with the decision since he felt the battery change was out of his hands. "I was in a wall, front on and I've been hit by two other cars through no fault of my own, damaged my battery and I've been penalised for it," he grimaced. "My car today was unbelievable. I was so fast."

SIMS BOOSTED BY FOURTH

Alexander Sims reckoned his race two fourth place "feels like a podium" and, despite missing out on third late on to Mitch Evans, he credited his Mahindra team with finding a strong performance baseline. "My mindset was inevitably a little bit more wanting to try and score some decent points here rather than look to win the race," he said. "It's a nice result and a just reward for the whole team."

CAMARA IN THE FRAME

Sergio Sette Camara (below) missed out on race one due to his qualifying accident, but made up for it by qualifying fourth for race two. Although he hoped for points, the Dragon Penske's comparative lack of efficiency left the Brazilian tumbling down the order in the second half of the race. Team-mate Antonio Giovinazzi qualified 12th, but also dropped through the field and retired with mechanical issues.

GALLOWAY

Cassidy's crew turned this into a pole-winner, but new battery brought swingeing grid penalty

GALLOWAY

RESULTS ROUND 8/10, NEW YORK (USA), 16-17 JULY 29 LAPS – 41.806 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	**Nick Cassidy** (NZL)	Envision Racing / Audi e-tron FE07	35m04.095s
2	**Lucas di Grassi** (BRA)	Venturi Racing / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+1.123s
3	**Robin Frijns** (NLD)	Envision Racing / Audi e-tron FE07	+1.671s
4	**Stoffel Vandoorne** (BEL)	Mercedes / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+3.693s
5	**Sebastien Buemi** (CHE)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM03	+5.570s
6	**Pascal Wehrlein** (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric	+5.783s
7	**Sam Bird** (GBR)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-TYPE 5	+7.207s
8	**Nyck de Vries** (NLD)	Mercedes / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+7.503s
9	**Edoardo Mortara** (CHE)	Venturi Racing / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+9.734s
10	**Jake Dennis** (GBR)	Andretti / BMW iFE.21	+11.595s
11	**Mitch Evans** (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-TYPE 5	+13.605s
12	**Maximilian Gunther** (DEU)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM03	+13.763s
13	**Oliver Rowland** (GBR)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M7Electro	+14.924s
14	**Alexander Sims** (GBR)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M7Electro	+16.648s
15	**Oliver Turvey** (GBR)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 001	+19.707s
16	**Andre Lotterer** (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric	+24.384s
17	**Dan Ticktum** (GBR)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 001	+25.312s
18	**Jean-Eric Vergne** (FRA)	DS Techeetah / DS E-Tense FE21	+53.018s
19	**Oliver Askew** (USA)	Andretti / BMW iFE.21	+1m22.282s
R	**Antonio Felix da Costa** (PRT)	DS Techeetah / DS E-Tense FE21	28 laps-puncture
R	**Antonio Giovinazzi** (ITA)	Dragon Penske Autosport / Penske EV-5	0 laps-suspension/damage
NS	**Sergio Sette Camara** (BRA)	Dragon Penske Autosport / Penske EV-5	accident damage

Winner's average speed 71.527mph. **Fastest lap** **Mortara** 1m10.843s, 73.256mph.

QUALIFYING **1 Cassidy 1m08.980s**; 2 **Vandoorne** 1m08.988s; 3 **di Grassi** 1m09.559s; 4 **Wehrlein** 1m10.515s; 5 **Buemi** 1m12.661s; 6 **Sims** 1m13.220s; 7 **Frijns** 1m14.799s; 8 **Bird** 1m14.998s; 9 **Mortara** 1m09.777s; 10 **da Costa** 1m12.464s; 11 **de Vries** 1m09.810s; 12 **Rowland** 1m12.613s; 13 **Dennis** 1m09.937s; 14 **Evans** 1m12.693s; 15 **Gunther** 1m10.022s; 16 **Vergne** 1m13.598s; 17 **Lotterer** 1m10.084s; 18 **Ticktum** 1m13.716s; 19 **Giovinazzi** 1m14.580s; 20 **Sette Camara** no time; 21 **Turvey** 1m15.130s; 22 **Askew** 1m16.319s*.

RACE 2 (39 LAPS – 56.222 MILES)
1 da Costa 46m55.511s; 2 **Vandoorne** +0.929s; 3 **Evans** +3.524s; 4 **Sims** +3.631s; 5 **Bird** +4.412s; 6 **Frijns** +4.979s; 7 **de Vries** +6.233s; 8 **Dennis** +6.316s; 9 **Lotterer** +6.590s; 10 **Mortara** +13.449s; 11 **Wehrlein** +18.469s; 12 **Ticktum** +23.002s; 13 **Buemi** +30.216s; 14 **Rowland** +32.676s; 15 **Cassidy** +39.699s; 16 **Turvey** +43.255s; 17 **Sette Camara** +1m08.193s; EX **Gunther** +45.934s; R **Vergne** 36 laps-accident damage; R **di Grassi** 36 laps-accident damage; R **Askew** 36 laps-accident damage; R **Giovinazzi** 27 laps-mechanical.
Winner's average speed 71.886mph. **Fastest lap** **Mortara** 1m10.378s, 73.740mph.

QUALIFYING **1 da Costa 1m08.751s**; 2 **Sims** 1m08.830s; 3 **Lotterer** 1m10.420s; 4 **Sette Camara** 1m08.726s; 5 **Vandoorne** 1m08.765s; 6 **Evans** 1m08.802s; 7 **de Vries** 1m08.880s; 8 **Askew** 1m09.742s; 9 **Dennis** 1m09.492s; 10 **Frijns** 1m09.760s; 11 **Giovinazzi** 1m09.528s; 12 **Vergne** 1m09.795s; 13 **Buemi** 1m09.645s; 14 **Rowland** 1m09.853s; 15 **Gunther** 1m09.660s; 16 **Bird** 1m09.957s; 17 **Ticktum** 1m09.688s; 18 **Wehrlein** 1m34.007s; 19 **di Grassi** 1m09.700s; 20 **Mortara** no time; 21 **Turvey** 1m09.870s; 22 **Cassidy** 1m08.584s*. *grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Vandoorne 155**; 2 **Mortara** 144; 3 **Evans** 139; 4 **Vergne** 128; 5 **Frijns** 104; 6 **da Costa** 100; 7 **di Grassi** 84; 8 **de Vries** 83; 9 **Wehrlein** 63; 10 **Lotterer** 63.

NEXT REPORT
FORMULA E LONDON
4 AUGUST ISSUE

Dixon broke his season duck for 2022 in style with consummate win in Toronto…

INDYCAR TORONTO

Maestro Dixon gets back in the winning groove

The Kiwi hadn't won yet in 2022, but he defeated Colton Herta around the Ontario streets to match Mario Andretti's tally of 52 wins in Indycar competition

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

It's only when you haven't seen it happen for some time that you remember how good Scott Dixon is at making an IndyCar race win look easy. This one, his fourth in Toronto, was his 52nd overall, and drew him level with Mario Andretti for second in IndyCar's all-time winners list. It extended a record he already owned for winning at least one race in consecutive seasons — that now stands at 18 — while overall, he has visited victory lane in 20 of his 22 years at the top level of US open-wheel racing.

But there may have been something far more significant about that triumph last Sunday: Dixon has now moved into fifth in the championship, just 44 points behind leader Marcus Ericsson and only nine behind second-placed Will Power who, like Team Penske stablemate Josef Newgarden, suffered a very poor weekend north of the border. Should Dixon ultimately prevail come season's end, he will match another great, AJ Foyt, by clinching a seventh Indycar title. No one has won more.

The 1.786-mile course around Toronto's Exhibition Place is notoriously difficult and, since the COVID-19 pandemic and the US-Canada travel restrictions had caused the venue to be deleted from the schedule the previous two seasons, 13 of the 25 participants in last weekend's race had either never encountered the course at all or at least had only tackled it in one or more of the Road To Indy formulas.

In practice, two of the more significant Toronto newbies, Chip Ganassi Racing's Alex Palou (surprisingly) and Andretti Autosport's Romain Grosjean (unsurprisingly), found the wall. The reigning series champion clipped the inside wall at the right-hand Turn 1 just enough to push him wide on exit and swipe the left-side wheels against concrete and bend his suspension. Come qualifying, his engine burped into silence and he was left down in 22nd on the grid.

Grosjean's shunt in second practice was more substantial and more typical of the course, the rear of the Andretti car getting overly lively through the bumps of the last

LEVITT

…and then took a well-earned drink
NELSON

turn so, as he applied the power, he smacked the right-rear against the concrete hard. In his hastily rebuilt car, he looked more subdued come qualifying, and was grateful to claim 11th on the grid.

Three drivers would gladly have swapped places with him, they being Graham Rahal, Power and 2019 Toronto winner Simon Pagenaud. This trio had looked dead certs for inclusion in the Firestone Fast Six but, after the red-flag delay caused by Palou's mechanical issue in Q1 Group 2, IndyCar found time to allow drivers just one last flier. All three looked set to graduate to Q2 — Power's lap was 0.34 seconds up on Colton Herta's pacesetting run in the session — when AJ Foyt Racing's immensely promising but increasingly incident-prone rookie Kyle Kirkwood smacked the wall and spun, bringing out another red. Rahal, Power and Pagenaud were immensely frustrated to be left in 14th, 16th and 18th.

Up front, becoming IndyCar's first repeat polewinner of the season, was Herta, who whipped around the course in 59.2698s, elated to find his Andretti Autosport car faster on used Firestone reds than new reds. Just 0.0894s slower was Dixon, the Ganassi veteran still seeking his first road or street course pole since 2016, with Newgarden and Alexander Rossi occupying row two.

At the start, Herta got away cleanly and Dixon moved hard right behind him to discourage Newgarden from getting any ideas of grabbing second. Near the back, Takuma Sato, who had already suffered contact with a wall in practice, was squeezed hard into the wall on the outside of Turn 1 as the pack went three-wide. The hapless veteran drove his heavily damaged car back to the pits but to no avail, and shedding parts along the way caused a two-lap caution.

The race resumed with the frontrunners in similar order, and at the end of lap nine the Ganassi team called in Palou, already up from 22nd to 17th, to get him off the red tyres and onto primaries. The power of the undercut was strong, and soon folks like Pagenaud, David Malukas (the rookie had qualified an excellent fifth) and Power (up to 12th) were doing the same. In the Aussie's case that was only too welcome because his car was graining its front-left much too hard.

It was the pitstops of Juncos Hollinger's impressive rookie Callum Ilott on lap 13 and Ericsson two tours later that forced the hands of all the frontrunners, for a yellow now would spell disaster for those who hadn't stopped, and would cycle Ilott and Ericsson into the lead. On lap 17 Dixon, who had been shadowing Herta, made his stop, with the leader pitting a lap later. Herta emerged from the pits on cold primaries in front of Dixon, whose rubber was warm enough for him to pass the Andretti car without fuss or drama. It would turn out to be the winning move.

It didn't give Dixon the lead, however, for drivers who had started in lowly grid slots had decided the risk of the race going yellow was outweighed by the need to do something to move up the order. Rahal, who had started the race as the highest-placed driver on primaries, made full use of them up front, easily able to stay ahead of Rinus VeeKay and Pato O'Ward until pitting on »

THE UNDERDOG BOUNCING BACK

LEVITT

Graham Rahal can sometimes be accused of overegging the pudding with his "we coulda been contenders"-type spiel following the Rahal Letterman Lanigan squad's most recent episode of underperformance. But the sympathy for him and his team after qualifying was genuine and deserved. For the first time all year, he and RLL as a whole had looked genuinely strong, and misfortune had ruined their moment (see main text).

But Rahal is a hell of a racer, and he determinedly set about making the primary-alternate-primary tyre sequence work. With a bold pass on Team Penske's Scott McLaughlin at the final restart, Rahal levered his way into fourth and held off Marcus Ericsson to the chequered flag for his best finish of the season.

"P4 is like a win for us," admitted Rahal. "Strategy-wise, nothing was given to us. We ran really long on the first stint and we were the fastest car on track, and the yellow kind of hurt us a little. But the guys did an unbelievable job in the pits."

Putting the result into perspective, he added: "From an engineering and team standpoint, for us to stay positive has been hard. A lot of people doubt us, a lot of people think I can't drive… We've just put our heads down.

"Others are continuing to develop too, so for us to try and close that gap from as far back as we were mid-season is really, really hard. It's not something traditionally that you can do but we had great tests in Sebring and Iowa. We're still deficient in some areas, but today was a great step in the right direction."

BAKER

lap 25. VeeKay and O'Ward left it six and seven laps longer respectively before pitting.

With Dixon now up front running in clean air, he was able to pull a 2s gap on Herta to avoid attack but didn't wish to push harder because (1) the early first stop meant he – and most others – needed to save a lot of fuel to make it on only one more stop, (2) the #9 Ganassi car was loose on corner entry, which was helping his fuel mileage by making it easy to pivot while off-throttle, but it was using up his rear tyres more rapidly than he wished, and (3) if – when – there was another yellow, he wanted enough grip to fend off Herta on the restart.

These two had disappeared into a race of their own, because the off-strategy Conor Daly and Jimmie Johnson ran third and fourth, and next up Newgarden, Rossi, Felix Rosenqvist, Malukas and Scott McLaughlin were also trying to eke out their fuel, so weren't willing to use the thirsty push-to-pass boost to make a move. It wasn't until lap 36 that Daly pitted and released the train of cars behind him, by which time Newgarden et al were 14s behind the front pair. Nor could they close that gap because it's not as if their fuel situation eased...

"Herta's headsock had lost its tension, allowing his mane of hair to creep forward and obscure his view"

And then on lap 45 of the 85-lap race they were gifted a caution. Rosenqvist, encouraged by strategist Billy Vincent, suggested that Rossi was beginning to look easy meat for a pass. At Turn 3, the tight right-hander at the end of the circuit's 180mph straight, Rosenqvist suddenly dived down the inside of the driver who will join him under the McLaren umbrella in 2023. The pair exited the turn side by side but, as Rosenqvist put the throttle down to squirt ahead, his car slid sideways. For the second time in two races, Rossi found wheel-to-wheel contact wrenching the steering wheel from his grasp, and this time sending him head-on into the barrier on the outside. Race Control deemed the move acceptable, and Rosenqvist retained his fourth place.

The necessary caution to retrieve the broken Andretti car saw most drivers' worst fears realised since 20 of the 22 cars now bunched behind the safety car headed for the narrow and tortuous left-right-left pitlane that has been in use since 2016, when construction work on a hotel meant the pits moved from the right side of the start-finish straight to the left. Sure enough it was busy and chaotic, but the only big losers were Newgarden, who parked too far from his crew, meaning his refueller struggled to engage the hose in the buckeye, and Malukas. They had entered the pits in third and fifth, and emerged 11th and 14th.

Rosenqvist leads McLaughlin on his way to third place

BAKER

Dixon was of course relieved to remain in front of Herta – the #9 crew is quite exceptional – but was alarmed to realise that the two Ed Carpenter Racing cars of VeeKay and Daly had remained out and now ran 1-2. It would be wrong to describe them as off strategy, particularly VeeKay, whose tacticians had resolutely kept him on a two-stop regardless of yellows, thereby breaking his race into thirds. It was the vast majority of the field who were 'off-strategy'.

Whatever, the upshot was that the dirty air from the ECR cars accentuated the oversteering nature of Dixon's car, making it easier for him to make a mistake. The good thing was that they were light enough and therefore fast enough to not severely hold him up or back him into Herta, who looked very feisty following the restart but was burning up his push-to-pass – and therefore excess fuel – trying to find a way through.

Under the third caution period, caused by concrete from the apex of Turn 1 being torn up and needing removal, Daly pitted out of Dixon's way. Again the Ganassi driver held off the Andretti man at the restart, and then VeeKay pitted under the fourth caution that soon followed, caused

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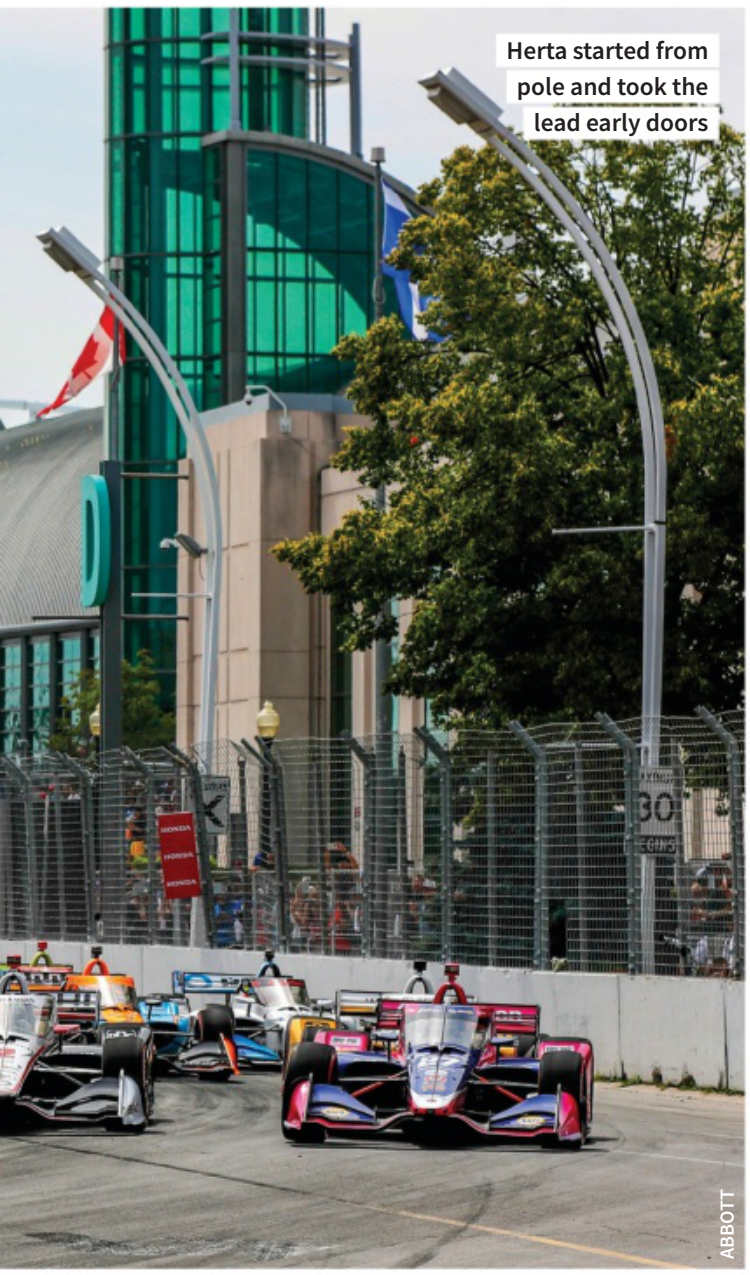
Herta started from pole and took the lead early doors

ABBOTT

by Kirkwood colliding with Johnson.

In clean air at last, Dixon was able to stretch out a 1.8s lead over Herta for the final 19-lap run to the chequered flag, and Herta instead had to watch his mirrors for the increasingly threatening Rosenqvist, who had been much the faster of the two Arrow McLaren SP drivers all weekend. Herta's cause was hurt by a most bizarre problem – his headsock had suddenly lost all its tension, allowing his mane of hair to creep forward and partly obscure his vision, leaving him to look left and right out of his visor in order to judge his braking points. In the circumstances, he did a wonderful job to retain his runner-up slot, crossing the line 0.8s behind the truly flawless Dixon and 0.5s ahead of Rosenqvist.

Rahal's bounceback to fourth (see panel, p41) was no less than he and RLL's #15 team deserved, while Ericsson could be content with fifth, extending his points lead over the troubled Power to 35 and holding off the nonetheless impressive Palou, who twice tried to get physical with his team-mate on restarts before deciding that sixth place from 22nd on the grid was a good day's work.

NEXT REPORT

IOWA SPEEDWAY 28 JULY ISSUE

Points make prizes? Series leader Ericsson was a solid fifth

NELSON

RESULTS ROUND 10/16, TORONTO (CAN), 17 JULY (85 LAPS – 151.810 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Scott Dixon** (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	1h38m45.3087s
2	**Colton Herta** (USA)	Andretti Autosport with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	+0.8106s
3	**Felix Rosenqvist** (SWE)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.3490s
4	**Graham Rahal** (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+4.4830s
5	**Marcus Ericsson** (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+5.1260s
6	**Alex Palou** (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+6.3629s
7	**Simon Pagenaud** (FRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+8.7398s
8	**Christian Lundgaard** (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+9.3820s
9	**Scott McLaughlin** (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+10.2868s
10	**Josef Newgarden** (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+10.6561s
11	**Pato O'Ward** (MEX)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	+12.4284s
12	**David Malukas** (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with HMD / Dallara-Honda	+13.3711s
13	**Rinus van Kalmthout** (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+18.2715s
14	**Callum Ilott** (GBR)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+18.4471s
15	**Will Power** (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+19.0185s
16	**Romain Grosjean** (FRA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+19.7939s
17	**Helio Castroneves** (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+20.3903s
18	**Devlin DeFrancesco** (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+21.2042s
19	**Jack Harvey** (GBR)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+21.9470s
20	**Conor Daly** (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+24.2445s
21	**Jimmie Johnson** (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	73 laps-accident damage
22	**Kyle Kirkwood** (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	58 laps-accident
23	**Alexander Rossi** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	44 laps-accident
24	**Dalton Kellett** (CAN)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	30 laps-engine
25	**Takuma Sato** (JPN)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR / Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident damage

Winner's average speed 92.234mph. **Fastest lap** **Malukas** 1m00.8307s, 105.697mph.

Q3 **1 Herta 59.2698s**; 2 **Dixon** 59.3592s; 3 **Newgarden** 59.5257s; 4 **Rossi** 59.5544s; 5 **Malukas** 59.6140s; 6 **McLaughlin** 59.9558s.
Q2 **Rossi 59.3709s**; **Newgarden** 59.4614s; **Malukas** 59.4638s; **Dixon** 59.5348s; **Herta** 59.5391s; **McLaughlin** 59.5876s; 7 **Ilott** 59.6352s; 8 **Rosenqvist** 59.6630s; 9 **Ericsson** 59.8527s; 10 **Lundgaard** 59.9151s; 11 **Grosjean** 1m00.0819s; 12 **DeFrancesco** 1m14.8882s.
Q1 – GROUP 1 **Ericsson 59.6875s**; **Dixon** 59.6996s; **Rossi** 59.7724s; **Ilott** 59.8315s; **Malukas** 59.8686s; **McLaughlin** 59.9217s; 13 **Harvey** 1m00.0212s; 15 **O'Ward** 1m00.1193s; 17 **Castroneves** 1m00.2712s; 19 **Sato** 1m00.5324s; 21 **Johnson** 1m00.9817s; 23 **Kellett** no time.
Q1 – GROUP 2 **Herta 1m00.0681s**; **DeFrancesco** 1m00.1543s; **Newgarden** 1m00.1584s; **Grosjean** 1m00.2755s; **Rosenqvist** 1m00.3655s; **Lundgaard** 1m00.5856s; 14 **Rahal** 1m00.6805s; 16 **Power** 1m00.7974s; 18 **Pagenaud** 1m00.7974s; 20 **van Kalmthout** 1m01.0870s; 22 **Palou** 1m03.0514s; 24 **Kirkwood** 1m03.2511s; 25 **Daly** 1m05.2593s.

CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Ericsson 351**; 2 **Power** 316; 3 **Palou** 314; 4 **Newgarden** 307; 5 **Dixon** 307; 6 **O'Ward** 276; 7 **McLaughlin** 274; 8 **Herta** 254; 9 **Rosenqvist** 244; 10 **Pagenaud** 243.

Sassy Sasahara uses strategy for maiden win

SUPER FORMULA
FUJI (JPN)
17 JULY
ROUND 5/7

Sasahara got lucky with safety car
ISHIHARA
motorsport IMAGES

Ukyo Sasahara claimed a first Super Formula win in unusual circumstances at Fuji when Yuhi Sekiguchi was robbed of the chance to end a three-year victory drought.

Sekiguchi, who had taken pole in the wet on Saturday, led the way until his Impul car shed its left-rear wheel on lap 25 of 40 during his outlap following his mandatory pitstop. This prompted a safety-car period that allowed Team Mugen driver Sasahara, yet to stop at that point, to clear his tyre change and rejoin well clear of the chasing pack, led by Sho Tsuboi (Inging) and championship leader Tomoki Nojiri in the other Mugen car.

Once the race resumed on lap 31, there was no stopping Sasahara, who became the fifth winner in six Super Formula races this year. His victory owed much to luck, but few would begrudge Sasahara his success given the misfortune that has plagued his time in Japan's top single-seater series. In fact, he was only handed the chance to rejoin Mugen a matter of weeks before the start of pre-season testing when the team made a late call to run a second car in-house.

Tsuboi claimed his best finish of a rotten season so far in second but was left to rue pitting a lap early. He had been well ahead of Sasahara and pre-empted the safety car by pitting on lap 26 but, had he hung on for one more lap, he would have resumed ahead.

Nojiri enhanced his points lead to 29 on a day when his two nearest title rivals, Ryo Hirakawa and Sacha Fenestraz, didn't finish. From 11th on the grid, Hirakawa didn't make it much beyond the first corner – his Impul car was tapped into a spin by Toshiki Oyu on the exit, also collecting Atsushi Miyake.

Fenestraz meanwhile was sent hurtling into the barriers at Turn 2 when he was tapped from behind by Naoki Yamamoto as the pair battled for seventh on the third lap. The Frenchman was taken to hospital for checks but was thankfully unhurt.

JAMIE KLEIN

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Bell peels his way into playoffs with victory

NASCAR CUP SERIES
NEW HAMPSHIRE (USA)
17 JULY
ROUND 20/36

Christopher Bell won his way into the NASCAR Cup Series playoff picture with a surprise win last Sunday at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.

Martin Truex Jr dominated much of the race, leading 172 of 301 laps, but a decision by himself and Kevin Harvick to take two tyres instead of four on the final pitstop knocked both out of contention for the win.

That opened the door first for Chase Elliott, whose Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet took the lead, and then Bell, who at the wheel of his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota got around Elliott with 41 laps remaining and never looked back. Both drivers had taken four new tyres on their last stop. Without another caution, Bell cruised to a 5.767-second win over Elliott for his first victory of the 2022 season and just the second of his career.

Bell took the lead from Elliott (following) and went on to take the win
VINLOVE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Bell, 27, becomes the 14th different winner in the Cup Series this season and was in serious danger of missing the 16-driver playoffs without a victory. "Man, that one was much needed right there," he said. "I'll tell you what, that was a hell of a race from my viewpoint."

Behind 2020 champion and 2022 series leader Elliott, Bubba Wallace finished third – his second-best finish of the season in his 23XI Racing Toyota – with Truex in fourth and Harvick rounding out the top five. Completing the top 10 were Denny Hamlin, Brad Keselowski, Ross Chastain, Daniel Suarez and Kurt Busch.

Six races remain in the 26-race regular season before the playoffs begin.

JIM UTTER

Porsche pair cordial with dash at Lime Rock

IMSA SPORTSCAR
LIME ROCK (USA)
16 JULY
ROUND 9/12

Winning Porsche leads Lexus, Aston and Corvette

Pfaff Motorsports maintained its stranglehold on the IMSA GTD Pro category as Porsche factory drivers Matt Campbell and Mathieu Jaminet scored the Canadian's team fourth win from seven starts. The two-hour-40-minute race around the tight, twisty venue in rural Connecticut was one of two this season to be contested only by the GT cars.

Campbell scorched to his first IMSA pole on Friday, then led the early stages, chased by Jack Hawksworth, making a welcome return to the Vasser Sullivan Lexus team after sustaining injuries in a motocross accident, the Heart of Racing Team Aston Martin of Ross Gunn and Jordan Taylor's Corvette.

The order was shuffled following an early round of pitstops. Hawksworth took advantage of an early stop and a fresh set of tyres to leapfrog into the lead, while Campbell, the last to visit the pitlane, rejoined in third behind the Corvette. The yellow C8R was committed to a three-stop strategy when Antonio Garcia took over from Taylor after 83 laps, although the Spaniard was out of the race soon afterwards following contact with the lapped Mercedes of Jules Gounon.

The other GTD Pro cars pursued a more conventional two-stop approach. Campbell executed a crucial pass on Hawksworth on the 100th lap, with around 70 minutes remaining, and six laps later made his final stop after which Jaminet resumed in the lead.

Alex Riberas, taking over from Gunn, emerged second ahead of Ben Barnicoat, in for Hawksworth, which is how the leading positions remained despite a late full-course caution after Ryan Eversley crashed the Rick Ware Racing Acura heavily.

Frankie Montecalvo and Aaron Telitz (Vasser Sullivan Lexus) appeared to have the GTD class in hand before the caution. But Philip Ellis (Winward Mercedes) barged past at the restart, only to run out of fuel on the final lap. Telitz had to make an extra stop due to damage, while Madison Snow/Bryan Sellers (Paul Miller Racing BMW M4), seemingly set for fourth, slipped past Roman De Angelis/Maxime Martin (Heart of Racing Aston), then inherited the win when Ellis slowed.

JEREMY SHAW

Brit Foster in catbird seat for the title

INDY PRO 2000
TORONTO (CAN)
16-17 JULY
ROUND 7/9

Foster was out on his own in Toronto

Basingstoke native Louis Foster appears to have one hand on the Indy Pro 2000 title after producing the perfect weekend in Toronto to take the maximum points haul possible from the series' two races there. For both, Foster earned the bonus points for taking pole, setting fastest race lap and leading most laps, so that he now leads the championship by 71 points after 14 of the 18 races. That he achieved these latest glories north of the border for Michael Duncalfe's Canadian-based Exclusive Autosport was the cherry on the cake.

In Foster's fifth win of the season, on Saturday, he led compatriot Enaam Ahmed of Juncos Hollinger Racing to the chequered flag. Turn 3 Motorsports' Josh Green bounced back from a crash in qualifying to displace Foster's closest title rival Reece Gold (also Juncos Hollinger) from a podium finish.

Sunday's race was a messier affair, and Foster lost several of his possible challengers for victory at Turn 1 on the first lap. Nolan Siegel was struck by Jordan Missig in a shunt that removed Green from the action, and also involved Kiko Porto and Ahmed.

The recovering Siegel was unlucky to again become the victim of someone else's error on lap six, and this time he was eliminated. Missig, who had survived the first-lap shunt that he triggered, would be penalised post-race for avoidable contact, which allowed Gold into second, and Yuven Sundaramoorthy of Pabst Racing into third.

Despite his misfortune in the second race, Ahmed has now moved into third in the standings, 20 points behind team-mate Gold.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

WEEKEND WINNERS

SUPER FORMULA
FUJI (JPN)
Ukyo Sasahara
Team Mugen
(Dallara-Honda)

IMSA SPORTSCAR
LIME ROCK (USA)
GTD Pro Matt Campbell/Mathieu Jaminet
Pfaff Motorsports
(Porsche 911 GT3-R)
GTD Bryan Sellers/Madison Snow
Paul Miller Racing
(BMW M4 GT3)

NASCAR CUP SERIES
NEW HAMPSHIRE MOTOR SPEEDWAY (USA)
Christopher Bell
Joe Gibbs Racing
(Toyota Camry)

INDY PRO 2000
TORONTO (CAN)
Races 1 & 2 Louis Foster
Exclusive Autosport

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Radical plans Las Vegas World Finals celebration

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V16 machine was part of celebrations for 60 years since Hill's BRM F1 title success

PAUL LAWRENCE

BRM V16 stars at Shelsley Walsh

CLASSIC NOSTALGIA

A public demonstration of the BRM P15 V16 recreation was the highlight of the Shelsley Walsh Classic Nostalgia event last weekend.

As the Worcestershire hill bathed in sunshine, Rick Hall wowed a big audience with demonstration runs in the newly completed V16 continuation car. The spectacle amply illustrated both the noise generated by the 1952 car and the quality of work that has gone into this project to build exacting and period-faithful versions of the 70-year-old machine.

The V16 was there as part of the event's central theme: a celebration of the 60th anniversary of Graham Hill's 1962 world championship title for the British team.

A gaggle of BRMs was demonstrated, and a number of former employees and drivers including Richard Attwood and Mike Wilds were on hand. But it was the V16 that stole the show as it wailed up the side of the Teme Valley. "All I wanted to do was make some noise and show the car and not do anything stupid," said Hall.

Attwood drove his own P261, while Wilds was thrilled to be reunited with a P160 Formula 1 car, the first BRM he drove before signing for the team in 1975. The P154 Can-Am car from the Hepworth brothers was another crowd-pleaser.

Alongside the BRM celebrations, the other headliners were the stunning rally cars from the Ralli 22 movement for Group B, Group A and early WRC cars. But it was the rallycross Ford RS200 of Steve Harris that was the highlight. The 700bhp monster rocketed up the hill in a little over 30 seconds to finish top of the rally cars.

Fastest time of Sunday, however, went to Robin Nicholson in his Mallock Mk20. While not quite matching his sub-30s personal best, he set a 30.21s to top the day's leaderboard, while Iain Stallard's Lotus 61 went fractionally faster on Saturday.

PAUL LAWRENCE

Painter impresses on single-seater debut

HISTORICS

Harry Painter starred in the Silverstone Vintage Sports-Car Club meeting last weekend in his first single-seater race at the wheel of his father's Brabham BT16.

Painter, 24, usually races a 1930s MG PA Special but stepped up to the 1965 Formula 2 car when the VSCC opened up its Racing Car event to all pre-'66 machines. The ex-Kurt Ahrens Brabham now runs a Lotus twin-cam engine rather than a period F2 SCA unit.

Painter's father Mike has owned the car for 15 years and used to race it in the defunct Classic Racing Car category. "It's not been out for five years and the tyres are at least 10 years old," he said.

MG PA regular swapped to ex-Ahrens Brabham BT16

PAUL LAWRENCE

Painter Jr drove the car for the first time in testing on Friday and went on to finish a fighting second on Saturday, having led the early laps.

"That was mega fun and I could certainly be persuaded to do it again," he said. Their main problem is finding suitable races for the car.

PAUL LAWRENCE

Radical announces Las Vegas World Finals for anniversary

OLLIE READ

RADICAL WORLD FINALS

Radical plans to organise a special World Finals event at the Spring Mountain circuit in Las Vegas as part of its 25th anniversary celebrations.

The 9-13 November showpiece is set to feature three classes for different examples of the manufacturer's prototypes. Those interested in competing can either have their own car shipped to the US or will be able to take advantage of an arrive-and-drive package to race Radical's latest models, the SR3 XX and SR10. Full factory support will also be available.

As well as four days of on-track action, there is due to be a range of off-track activities, including banquet dinners and special award ceremonies. Entries to the event are not yet open but drivers keen to secure their place can register their interest on Radical's website and more details will be released in the coming weeks.

"With a growing dealer community currently standing at 33 dealers across 21 countries, the return of worldwide travel, alongside drivers and dealers requesting events like this, we knew the time to do the World Finals was now," said Radical CEO Joe Anwyll.

"The Radical and Spring Mountain teams have worked closely to create something for the entire family and Radical Motorsport community. We are honoured that Spring Mountain are hosting the event, and the joint cooperation is testament to our excellent partnership.

"We understand that the off-track camaraderie is often as, if not more, important than the time racing at the circuit. We've got a range of activities, from excursions to evening networking, dinners, and the important awards celebrations for the racing winners; all from the stunning and recently renovated Spring Mountain Motor Resort and its surroundings."

Radical has undergone a major expansion in recent years and has particularly targeted the North American market. It has an existing relationship with the Spring Mountain circuit — a track that is usually only open to private members and features a series of corners inspired by famous turns from around the world — and is due to open an improved Radical Racing School at the venue next year.

Lamborghini test put forward by Topcats Racing for teens

JSCC

One Junior Saloon Car driver will get the chance to test a Lamborghini Huracan Super Trofeo over the winter as a prize organised in partnership with GT Cup squad Topcats Racing.

The initiative came about because Topcats driver Jensen Lunn approached JSCC coordinator Dave Beecroft at the end of last year asking about former JSCC racer Charlotte Birch, who has subsequently joined Topcats and raced the Huracan. Beecroft and Lunn kept in contact and have put together the latest addition to the JSCC's prize offering.

The top three drivers already have the chance to sample a TCR car, while the best three rookies get to test a Civic Cup machine. The winner of the Lamborghini prize will be chosen by a panel of judges, who will select a driver who best represents the spirit of the series.

"It will go to somebody who is not necessarily the quickest but shows the spirit of the JSCC by being friendly, helpful and supporting the championship," said Beecroft, who added that it is only open to those who have raced in the series for two years, to ensure they have sufficient experience to drive the Lamborghini.

Drivers need to have raced in JSCC for two years
RICHARD STYLES

"It's an amazing opportunity for them, especially for the kids that cannot afford that type of racing moving forward."

The category has also revealed that its annual scholarship assessment day will take place at Pembrey on 11 February, and Beecroft said it is possible that the Huracan test will be held that weekend.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Dorlin and Malykhin have raced Lamborghini so far in 2022 campaign

JEP

Dorlin and Malykhin switch to Porsche for Spa BGT round

BRITISH GT

British GT frontrunners James Dorlin and Alex Malykhin will switch to a Porsche 911 GT3-R for this weekend's round at Spa.

The Redline Racing duo sit third overall in the GT3 standings, and have scored points in all but the opening race at Oulton Park in a Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo. Their switch to the Porsche comes a week before Malykhin uses the same machine in the Spa 24 Hours, when it will be run by Allied Racing.

"It's a bit easier to be in the same car for two weeks on the bounce, to be honest that's the main thought process rather than thinking it's going to give us an advantage," said Dorlin. "We've driven the Porsche before in the GT World Challenge. We only did one race in it but it's a fairly familiar car. We've been doing really well in the Lamborghini and whether one is going to be quicker at Spa, I've no idea. As far as I know, we're only using the Porsche for Spa."

One driver not making the trip to Belgium is Shaun Balfe, who also missed the Snetterton round due to work commitments. He and team-mate Adam Carroll were third in the standings before that event at the wheel of their Balfe Motorsport Audi.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Short joins Hillspeed for GB4 debut

GB4

Tin-top racer Marcus Short will join the GB4 Championship for the series' Silverstone round this month with Hillspeed.

The 17-year-old son of sportscar stalwart Martin Short conducted a test with the team at Bedford Autodrome earlier this month, his first outing in a single-seater.

Short's first run in a car was last year in the Citroen C1 24 Hours at Silverstone, while this term he has had six outings in a Rover 216 GTI in the MG Cup, as well as completing two races in a Mosler GT car with his older brother Morgan.

"I don't know what to expect for Silverstone – it'll obviously be my first time as part of a GB4 weekend and my first time in the car on one of the actual race circuits," said Short Jr, who also competes in the official Formula 1 Esports Series. "I'm intending to go with the flow and just enjoy myself as much as possible."

Short will race alongside Megan Gilkes and Max Marzorati at Hillspeed – Marzorati leads the standings in the series' inaugural season.

Team boss Richard Ollerenshaw said: "It's great to be running three GB4 cars and we're very much looking forward to seeing Marcus teaming with Max and Megan."

IN THE HEADLINES

MURRAY BROTHERS RACE

With the SEAT Supercup not running at last weekend's Mondello Park meeting, Murray Motorsport was not as busy as usual, so brothers Eoin and Niall Murray raced two of their Fiesta Zetec cars against the regulars. Eoin qualified fifth in the 31-car strong grid, with Niall eighth. Both improved in the races, with Eoin initially taking the win in race two, before a penalty for 'improper driving' dropped him down the order.

CHALMERS TO MONDELLO

UK Ginetta Junior racer Fergus Chalmers was invited to Mondello Park last weekend by the organisers of the new Junior Mini Challenge. Despite no prior knowledge of the circuit or car, he impressed, qualifying third and jumping to second in the opening race. Chalmers scrapped with eventual winner David Travers and poleman Codey Keogh until he was forced to retire with gearbox failure.

TRACK LIMITS DSQs

A total of five cars were disqualified from the Silverstone 116 Trophy race last weekend following a number of track-limits infringements, after they had already received 5s and 10s penalties. A further six cars were also handed penalties during the 90-minute encounter around the National layout.

HARVEY JOINS 116 TROPHY

Tim Harvey and son Jamie made their debuts in the 116 Trophy at Silverstone last weekend (below). "We're having a dad and lad weekend – it's called motorsport for a reason and we're here to enjoy the sport," said the 1992 British Touring Car champion. The pair qualified fifth for the 90-minute race and finished third on the road, but were pushed back to sixth due to track-limits penalties.

MICK WALKER

JOHNSON PREPARES FOR REVIVAL DEBUT Seven-time NASCAR Cup champion Jimmie Johnson took to the Goodwood circuit earlier this month ahead of his debut in this September's Revival. Johnson sampled the AC Cobra that he will drive in the blue-riband RAC TT Celebration race, while he will also be in action in the St Mary's Trophy tin-top contest. The IndyCar driver is one of a number of US racing stars due to compete this year, among them IndyCar champions Scott Dixon and Dario Franchitti and four-time Indy 500 victor Helio Castroneves. **Photographs by Joseph Harding**

Emotional Cortina podium for Jamieson

HRDC

Aston Martin head of vehicle engineering for front-engined sports and GT cars Craig Jamieson finished an emotional third on his historic racing debut at Snetterton on Sunday, first time out in the Lotus Ford Cortina built to concours standard with input and encouragement from his late wife Karen, who died last October.

Painted in Aston Martin California Sage with Old English White stripes by the Normandale concern, the Cortina wowed onlookers. "Craig is the ultimate detail man," said Pete Johnston of Raceworks, which did the build from a bare shell with Jamieson and associates.

Pristine Cortina took a Jack Sears Trophy podium

The FIA Appendix K-spec car, powered by a Craig Beck-built engine, was shaken down at Snetterton recently. "After three laps to make sure all was OK, we sent Craig [previously a Sierra Cosworth and BMW Compact racer] out on gentle suspension settings, but he soon wanted a stiffer, more aggressive set-up," said Johnston.

Jamieson qualified second – behind British Touring Car ace Josh Cook in Mike Gardiner's well-raked Cortina – for the Jack Sears Trophy race, pipping Tim Scott Andrews (Falcon) on his last lap. Having not made a standing start before, Jamieson elected to set off from the pitlane, but passed Aimee Watts (Mini Cooper S) to seal the final podium place.

Factory Aston Martin racer Darren Turner, piloting Jonathan Lupton's 1930 LM4 in the Pre-War Sports Car race, has worked closely with Jamieson on dynamic road car development.

MARCUS PYE

F3 European Cup rivals collide at Zandvoort Historic GP event

HISTORIC F3

The second Historic Formula 3 European Cup race at the Zandvoort Historic Grand Prix meeting last weekend featured a dramatic clash between frontrunners Frederic Lajoux and Michael Ringstrom.

Ringstrom's Martini Mk42 attempted to pass Lajoux (March 793) on the second lap at Tarzan, but succeeded only in ploughing into his rival, with the pair walking away uninjured from the ensuing crash.

The race was won by Frederic Rouvier's March 783, while UK competitors David Thorburn and Fraser Gray were fourth and fifth in their Ralts. Lajoux and Ringstrom were second and third in the opener, won by Davide Leone's 783.

Elsewhere, Cooper T53 pilots Will Nuthall and Rudiger Friedrichs shared the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association spoils, while triple Le Mans 24 Hours winner Marco Werner (Lotus 87B) scored a double success in the Masters Racing Legends series for newer F1 machinery.

There were a number of British winners, including Calum Lockie and Julian Thomas lapping the Masters Gentlemen Drivers field in their Shelby Cobra, but Thomas and Andy Wolfe were beaten by Sam Tordoff's similar Ford Falcon in the concurrent Masters Pre-'66 Touring Cars race.

Steve Tandy did manage to take a double win, however, triumphing in both Masters Endurance Legends encounters in his LMP1 Peugeot.

Ringstrom is sent flying after Tarzan collision with Lajoux

TREVOR NOBLE

DSQ and double DNF hit Hart's hopes

TCR UK

The title hopes of TCR UK championship contender Max Hart were dealt a blow after he was disqualified from qualifying for a technical infringement at Oulton Park last weekend.

With no compensation weight on his Jamsport-run Hyundai i30 N TCR after a difficult previous round at Brands Hatch, Hart had qualified on pole position by 0.45 seconds. But his car's scrutineering logger recorded that its engine overboosted on three occasions during the session, so Hart's times were deleted and he was sent to the back of the grid with an additional 10s penalty.

"On the championship logging equipment, it was 40mbar too high momentarily," explained Jamsport boss Jamie Going. "Ironically, it was irrelevant anyhow because he got a DNF."

Hart had risen to 13th on lap five of an eventual 16, only to be sidelined after a powersteering hose failed. "We didn't have time to argue with them as I was supposed to be in the car so I just had to go," said Hart, who was advised of the penalty when the field was assembling for the race. "I can use this as a dropped score anyway, thankfully, so that doesn't damage my championship too much."

The season's early pacesetter also retired from race two, in which he set the fastest lap, when his car lost power. Having led the standings pre-weekend, Hart is now more than 40 points (equivalent to a race win) adrift of Isaac Smith but retains a small advantage when dropped scores are removed.

MARK PAULSON

IN THE HEADLINES

GROUP C CARS TO CLASSIC

The 40th anniversary of the start of the legendary Group C sportscar era will be celebrated at the Silverstone Classic. A series of demonstrations will be held at the 26-28 August event on the circuit that hosted the second ever Group C race. A works Rothmans Porsche 962, a John Fitzpatrick Racing 956 and Richard Lloyd Racing 962 are among those set to take part.

MASERATI'S FEWCOMERS WIN

Three of the five starters led the curious GT Allcomers Challenge that opened the Snetterton Historic 200 programme on Saturday. Early leader Chris Compton-Goddard's 2008 Belcar GT-winning Red Bull Ferrari F430 pitted after two laps when its drink container overflowed, short-circuiting the ECU. After the stops, Richard Dougal overpowered Richard Taffinder (Aston Martin GT4), who had wrested the lead from his Maserati GT4 partner Vance Kearney.

O'BRIEN'S LATE VSCC ENTRY

Michael O'Brien only entered the Pre-'66 Racing Car contest at Silverstone last Saturday at 1600 on Friday when he and father Mike discovered their Formula Junior Brabham BT6 was eligible. "We came over on Friday afternoon and realised we could do the race," said O'Brien Sr, boss of the circuit-based Speedsport team. With Michael on a clear weekend from his GT commitments, he finished a fighting third against more powerful cars.

UNIQUE ECLAT IN ACTION

Craig Houston took what is probably the only racing Lotus Excel-Eclat in the world to the Scottish Motor Racing Club's Cadwell Park away meeting last weekend. The multiple Scottish Classic and Saloon class winner built the 1982 car (below) – which is an Eclat fitted with later, sportier Excel bodywork – himself. He finished ninth in race one before a mystery fuel starvation issue caused him to retire from race two and the Allcomers contest.

STEVE JONES

A NEW ERA BECKONS

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The next step up the ladder

The reigning British F4 champion has found GB3 a challenge in 2022 but is still happy with the progress he's making in a one-car team

MATTHEW REES

This season I'm racing in the GB3 Championship and I've remained with JHR Developments, who I won the British Formula 4 Championship with last year. I'm not so happy with how this year has gone, solely because there's only been one podium. That's OK, but it's not where we want to be.

We are seventh in the championship, which is also not where I want to be, but as a first year in these new cars I think it's not terrible. We've had ups and downs, so I think it's just about controlling the downs and keeping the ups and hopefully we should move forward.

Everyone wants a team-mate to compare to, and teams can trial things on one car and see which one's quickest. As a one-car team, I think we lose that advantage, but at the same time there are no politics in the team and the attention is solely focused on me, which is quite a nice thing to have.

Another benefit is when we got the new car it was always me in it, there was no alternating, which was an issue for other teams. As a one-car team we can take it anywhere, it's always going to be me in the car, and the team can learn how the car works best for me. We develop as a team and we're not slow at all. My driving is getting better and we're moving forwards.

I'd love a team-mate because I'm not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, so I'd like to know where I can improve, whether I can brake later, or whether I can turn in just a little bit more. It's little things like that which have maybe not brought us to the front as much as we hoped we would be, but I think if we had a team-mate, we could see these things rather than us having to guess on set-ups. We can't really trial things because there's only one car to do it on.

"It's just about controlling the downs and keeping the ups and hopefully we'll move forward"

First year in GB3 has been character-building

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

We've had quite a lot of ups and downs this year, such as at Oulton Park, where we had our first podium, but Silverstone was by my standards pretty abysmal. In the reversed-grid race I moved up eight places from the start but then had an incident. I wouldn't say it was an opportunistic move as the move was there. At Donington Park I was challenging for the lead and went for a move at McLeans that didn't really work out. Snetterton was mixed again as we had good speed but had a suspension failure in race one so didn't finish.

Looking back to 2020, when we were testing ahead of F4, prior to Christmas I was always slower than my team-mate McKenzy Cresswell. I went away in the winter and started to focus on whether I could move forward. I came back and I think I was a tenth or two quicker than McKenzy consistently, but we were still a bit off Abbi Pulling in JHR's other car.

Towards the end of testing, we thought we could get a few wins at the end of the season, but maybe the championship was a bit too far. After round two of 2021, at Snetterton, things changed a bit because it was quite a big success and I think I had five poles in a row at that point, and only missed out on six for track limits. That's when the expectation came in of, 'Right, I think I can win this.'

We had quite a big mid-season slump where it wasn't ideal. I had a few podiums here and there, but no poles and no wins, which I wasn't happy about. Things changed again when we came to Donington Park in October — I got P1 in every single session apart from the reversed-grid race, but I think I made up places in that one and then won race three by 12.5 seconds. It was a very strong weekend and going into the final round at Brands Hatch it gave us some momentum and it seemed to work out, because I came away from the round with a bigger lead than we went in!

Looking ahead, we should remain in the fight for the rest of the GB3 season — we just need a bit of luck that should help us move forwards. Spa is coming up this weekend and I've never been there, so I can't say how I will find it. Either it will be really lovely, or I will hate it! Hopefully we should love it.

I don't really know about next year yet. We can stay in GB3, we can move to FIA F3, or even as an alternative there's a route into Indy or somewhere like that. There are a lot of options, we could choose any of them, but the main goal is to stay in driving and keep doing what I'm doing at the minute.

I've never driven a closed-wheel car, apart from the Ginetta, and I didn't really like it. So, I think that's why I could be solely focused on single-seaters but, to be honest, I'm open to trying anything.

Differential failure for Stevens/Ratcliff (170) helped Finburgh/Crosthwaite Cooper win

Cooper Monaco wins Stirling Moss Trophy race

SNETTERTON
MSVR/MRL
16-17 JULY

Evoking memories of local hero Jim Russell, the three-time Autosport national 500cc Formula 3 champion whose fiery 1959 Le Mans crash in a Cooper T49 Monaco changed his priority to the racing school he founded, Ollie Crosthwaite and Nick Finburgh's maiden Stirling Moss Trophy victory in a sister car was the talk of Motor Racing Legends' new Snetterton Historic event. Russell had won a race at Snetterton in a Monaco a month before his career-changing day — watched by our photographer, aged nine!

Third time out in future F5000 team owner Jackie Epstein and Bill Wilks's 1963 Targa Florio mount — owned by Crosthwaite & Gardiner's MD for 15 years but only recently restored — Ollie chased top qualifier Peter Ratcliff (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly) initially before relaying his great mate Finburgh. Nick chased down Ratcliff's partner Luke Stevens and went ahead when "catastrophic diff failure" sidelined the former Caterham champion, autocrossing at Brundle. Stevens did well to keep it out of the barriers and limp back to the pits. Stuart Morley thundered Richard Hudson's Lister-Chevrolet home second, having survived a huge spin at Riches lapping Peter Snowdon in David Reed's Aston Martin DB2.

Nigel Webb/John Young won the concurrent RAC Woodcote Trophy race after a fine run to third overall in the former's ex-Duncan Hamilton Jaguar C-type. They beat Rick Bourne/Malcolm Paul's ex-Mike Anthony Lotus-Bristol MkX and Patrick Watts/Malcolm Harrison in the Cooper-Bristol T25, a veteran of the 1953 Goodwood Nine Hours with Tommy Sopwith and John Coombs up.

Gareth Burnett's Alta aced the Pre-War Sports race, but he was content to let Eddie Williams (Frazer Nash Super Sports) past for a lap. "I wanted to see what he had, as I had plenty in hand," said the Irishman, who watched Patrick Blakeney-Edwards throttle back in the fast Nash when its Meadows engine got hot. Michael Birch made it a 1-3 for the Pace Historics team in his lofty Talbot AV105, with Clive Morley best of the Bentley boys.

Three Ford Sierra RS Cosworths and two Nissan Skylines scrapping in Sunday's twin Historic Touring Car Challenges enthralled the audience, who packed the grandstand at Murrays. Paul Mensley led both, the second from the back in his Murray Carter tribute Sierra, but finished neither, advantaging Ric Wood and Jonathan Bailey, whose Japanese monsters also chased David 'Fireball' Tomlin's RS500 each time.

"Following the Sierras, I knew I didn't have to push because of the amount of oil on my windscreen — I could taste the impending doom," said Wood, whose best lap of 1m16.985s (92.77mph) was the weekend's fastest. Behind them, Josh Cook enjoyed sharing Pete Hallford's 1970 Boss Mustang. Tony Dron Trophy and U2TC honours in the finale fell to sole survivors James Slaughter (Ford Capri) and Henry Mann/Karl Jones (Lotus Cortina).

A cracking Alfa Romeo Challenge, in which the top three battled throughout, opened the Historic Racing Drivers Club's offering. James Colburn (Giulia Sprint) maintained a narrow edge over brother Ben (1750 Berlina), who robustly staved off Chris Snowdon in Richard Melvin's Group 2 GTV — last raced here by Peter Hilliard in 1982 — for a Westbourne Motorsport 1-2. As James accelerated to the chequer, his potent two-litre engine's oil pressure dived, thus he switched off immediately. Newcomer Jake

Burnett's Alta faced early pressure in Pre-War race until Nash's engine got hot

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD STYLES

WEEKEND WINNERS

RAC WOODCOTE/STIRLING MOSS TROPHY
Ollie Crosthwaite/Nick Finburgh
(Cooper Monaco T49)

PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS
Gareth Burnett (Alta)

HISTORIC TOURING CAR CHALLENGE
Races 1 & 2 Ric Wood (Nissan Skyline GT-R R32)

HRDC ALFA ROMEO CHALLENGE
James Colburn (Giulia Sprint GT)

HRDC JACK SEARS TROPHY
Mike Gardiner/Josh Cook (Ford Lotus Cortina, below)

HRDC ALLSTARS
Matt Moore (AC Cobra)

RAC PALL MALL CUP
Richard Cook/Harvey Stanley (Shelby Cobra)

ALLCOMERS GT CHALLENGE
Vance Kearney/Richard Dougal (Maserati GT4)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Margulies's sonorous GTV6 finished fourth with a dink in his door after a first-lap kiss from Jonny Horsfield's Alfetta.

'Gentleman Jack' Sears would have approved of the Lotus Cortina podium lockout in the Pre-'66 Touring Car race. Mike Gardiner/Josh Cook lapped the field, chased by Mark Burton/Graham Pattle and Craig Jamieson, who elected to start his pristine machine from the pits having not previously done a standing start. Aimee Watts drove father Patrick's Mini Cooper S brilliantly to fourth, having got ahead of Jamieson during the stops, which delayed Tim Scott-Andrews's rumbling Ford Falcon.

Hotfoot from winning at the Silverstone Vintage Sports-Car Club event on Saturday in an Austin 7 Ulster, Matt Moore saddled his AC Cobra to victory in Dunlop Allstars with his elbow on the door "to direct cool air up my sleeve". Moore shook off Mike Thorne, enjoying his stunning new CRC-run Shelby GT350, with Ben Colburn (Lenham GT) third, having benefited from James Wilmoth spinning his Healey out of Riches following a safety car interlude.

MARCUS PYE

PUMPIN' JACKS FLASH ON THE GAS, GAS, GAS!

Overall winners were part of victorious Pumpin' Jacks team

An unconventional victory for Richard Cook and Harvey Stanley in Saturday's three-hour race, driving the former's Shelby Cobra, backed-up by fourth-placed Crispin Harris/James Wilmoth (Austin-Healey 3000) plus Stanley and Christian Coll (Porsche 911), rewarded the Pumpin' Jacks team with the Royal Automobile Club's Pall Mall Cup.

Having started in the Porsche, Stanley pitted after 10 minutes with its oil pressure light on, traced to an electrical glitch. This changed the strategy, since treating it as their first (of two) mandatory five-minute stops meant Stanley and Cook – in the Cobra – had to double-stint to minimise the time damage, given 85 minutes' maximum continuous driving time.

While Cook battled Olly Bryant (in Richard Hywel-Evans's Cobra) for the lead, Stanley's focus was upon eroding a four-lap deficit to the Tuthill-run 911s of Ferrari GT racer Bonamy Grimes and Johnny Mowlem and William Paul/Rory Butcher. All, however, were humbled by Rick Bourne in Malcolm Paul's TVR Grantura, which eventually succumbed to gearbox failure having run fourth.

Bryant built a cushion to Cook in a marathon 56-lap run before Hywel-Evans jumped in for a tactically short middle stint. All was going to plan when Bryant

Bryant kept winning Cobra behind in early battle

roared back into the fray but, after he'd whittled the gap to Stanley back to single figures, prospects of a grandstand finish for spectators were scotched. Bryant was handed a draconian three-minute stop/go penalty for a fuelling infringement, a mechanic having not replaced a glove, removed to free the filler cap catch. After a few laps, the disconsolate team – still set for second – threw in the towel.

This promoted the Pearsons-run Jaguar E-type of Lucas Bscher/Jack Layton/Andy Bentley to second, ahead of Harris/Wilmoth, who were charged down by the Ward family's Ginetta G4R, which the unrelated Chris put on pole. The twin-cam engined car fell to the back initially, but sterling work and Chris's sensational final stint earned third. Behind the big Healey, Grimes/Mowlem beat Paul/Butcher and Stanley/Coll in their private tussle.

William Paul had been kept honest by Marc Gordon/Nick Finburgh (Lotus Elite), which ran with its MGB team-mates Guy Harman/Finburgh for lap after lap over two phases of the race. They finished 57 seconds apart in an event that may have had 12 starters but lost only the TVR and Peter Haynes/Mark Donaldson's Lotus 11 to lack of oil pressure.

But a four-lap winning margin meant the day belonged to Cook and Stanley, who aced last October's Peter Auto enduro at Estoril. "We'd not won since, so I was getting worried," said Stanley, who worked down to 1m23.880s – six tenths shy of past master Bryant's race best – 10 laps from home. "The Cobra, with fewer gear changes and a shorter throw lever, was surprisingly much less physical to drive than the Porsche. The earlier I braked for the hairpin, the quicker I lapped. I blame [prep team] Pursuit for a fantastic set-up!"

MARCUS PYE

Maeers keeps young rivals at bay in Cooper

SILVERSTONE
VSCC
16 JULY

Painter (4) pushed Maeers hard in the Pre-'66 Racing Cars

An enthralling Pre-'66 Racing Car contest headlined the Vintage Sports-Car Club's annual Silverstone race meeting, with victory going to the Cooper T53 in the experienced hands of Justin Maeers.

A mix of pre and post-war single-seaters was brought together for the feature race and it delivered with an absorbing lead battle between three very different cars and drivers. The 2.5-litre Coventry Climax power of Maeers's T53 prevailed, but the final result was always in doubt as Harry Painter and Michael O'Brien battled furiously with the Cooper in their later Brabhams.

MG driver Painter, racing his father's twin-cam engined ex-Kurt Ahrens Brabham BT16 for the first time, was hugely impressive. He set the early pace under relentless pressure from the more experienced Maeers and GT ace O'Brien, back out in the Speedsport Formula Junior Brabham BT6 after placing a last-minute entry. It was nip and tuck all the way as they scythed through the slower traffic, with both Painter and Maeers taking a turn in the lead as the top three places changed constantly, the cars sometimes dodging either side of slower Pre-War machines.

As the race entered the closing stages, Maeers started to build a small margin while, in his wake, Painter belied his inexperience to battle furiously with O'Brien. They finished with Maeers barely a second ahead as Painter and O'Brien went side by side over the line in a blanket finish – just 0.09 seconds in Painter's favour.

"They both drove fantastically," said Maeers of his young rivals. "But, ultimately, the power pulled through for the old boy in the end!" Painter, who was elated after his first single-seater race, added: "I've never worked so hard for a race. That was the best race I've ever had." O'Brien, as expected, drove superbly to keep the Formula Junior on a par despite a significant power disadvantage.

Chris Keen was a notable winner in the FiSCaR race, which was combined with the Pre-'55 sportscars, threading his drum-braked Kurtis 500S to victory despite car and driver feeling the heat as the race developed. "The old girl doesn't like the hot weather very much," said Keen. John Ure never stopped chasing in his Cooper Bristol T24/25 and was only three seconds adrift after half an hour of flat-out racing.

Chris Mann leapt from his Alfa Romeo Disco Volante in the FiSCaR race straight to his even more desirable Alfa Romeo 8C Monza for the Standard and Modified Pre-War Sports contest, and duly claimed victory after a mighty battle with Ross Keeling's Delahaye 135Ms. A quick spin for the Delahaye resolved their tussle, and Keeling then had to work hard to get back into second and fend off Sue Darbyshire in her Morgan three-wheeler to secure the runner-up slot. "Last year, or maybe the year before, that pesky Delahaye went and beat me, so this is a kind of revenge – what a great race," said Mann.

Julian Wilton ended the day with a stylish Pre-War Allcomers Scratch victory in ERA R7B, while Alex Wilson was best of a modest 500 Owners Association Formula 3 pack in his Cooper Mk10.

At the start of the afternoon, young Oliver Llewellyn claimed the VSCC Specials race in the family Bentley 3/8, despite the best efforts of the pursuing Michael James (Riley 12/4 TT Sprite). A few minutes later, Llewellyn's father Tim tried to follow suit in

Keen (left) challenges for the lead at the start of the FiSCaR/ Pre-'55 race, which he won

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICK WALKER

WEEKEND WINNERS

VINTAGE/PRE-'66 RACING CARS
Justin Maeers (Cooper T53)

FISCAR/PRE-'55 SPORTSCARS
Chris Keen (Kurtis 500S)

STANDARD AND MODIFIED PRE-WAR SPORTS
Chris Mann (Alfa Romeo 8C Monza, above)

PRE-WAR SCRATCH
Julian Wilton (ERA R7B)

500cc FORMULA 3
Alex Wilson (Cooper Mk10)

VSCC SPECIALS
Oliver Llewellyn (Bentley 3/8, below)

AUSTIN 7 CENTENARY RACE
Matthew Moore (Ulster)

PRE-WAR ALLCOMERS HANDICAP
Race 1 Anthony Seber (Wolseley Hornet Special)
Race 2 Roland Woodtli (Riley 15/6 Special)

For full results visit: theresultslive.co.uk

the FiSCaR race but toured to the pits with concern over the oil pressure in his Allard. "It went beautifully but the oil pressure wasn't where I wanted," said Llewellyn Sr.

To celebrate 100 years of the Austin 7, a special centenary race ran for all varieties of the model and Matthew Moore was able to take his Ulster clear of a wonderfully diverse grid, lapping a full one minute per lap faster than the Chummy of tail-ender Mark Gold.

Anthony Seber had an easy run to a clear victory in the opening Pre-War Handicap race in his Wolseley Hornet Special, and Roland Woodtli somehow managed to win the second five-lap Handicap race by a full lap in his Riley 15/6 Special.

PAUL LAWRENCE

PROBLEMS FOR MAEERS The Parker GN of Justin Maeers is one of the most spectacular cars racing with the VSCC and has been continuously developed since 1924. Based on a GN chassis, it first went to Shelsley Walsh with a GN engine before acquiring a JAP V-twin motor in 1926. It was later fitted with a 6.2-litre Cirrus Hermes aircraft engine in the 1970s. It is road legal and was driven to Silverstone before it was sidelined by a broken propshaft.

RARE LOTUS HITS THE TRACK The Lotus MkIX is a rare sight in historic racing these days, and the example of Brian Arculus is thought to be the only one currently active in the UK. It is used sparingly and Arculus had only his second race in three years with it at the weekend. One of only 36 MkIXs built in 1955, the model was a forerunner to the more successful and prolific 11. "It's a very unusual shape, but quite pretty in its way," said Arculus. A run at Goodwood is next on the agenda.

RETURN TO COOPER T59 Historic single-seater racer Sam Wilson returned to the car in which he started his racing career for the Pre-'66 Racing Car contest at Silverstone. Wilson drove the ex-Bob Gerard Cooper T59, which he first raced back in 2008, having only run it once previously in the last decade. It was a Formula Junior car in 1962 when raced by John Taylor, and moved to Formula Libre in 1964 with a pre-crossflow Ford engine after the end of Formula Junior.

The Irish Vee spoils went to Newsome by just 0.078s

MICHAEL CHESTER

Newsome and Byrne star in Formula Vee thriller

MONDELLO PARK
MPSC
16-17 JULY

Formula Vee may have only had one race at Mondello Park last weekend but it produced some of the best action, with less than 0.1 seconds separating the top two at the flag.

Multiple champion Anthony Cross qualified his immaculate Sheane on pole position and, when the lights went out, he made a good start, but fellow front-row occupant Lee Newsome made a better one and it was he who led the capacity pack down to Turn 1. Behind, Jordan Kelly displaced his brother Owen and almost immediately was on the tail of the leading pair. Sean Newsome dived past Owen Kelly too, as Jordan Kelly sliced past Cross for second at Turn 3.

Meanwhile, Jack Byrne was on an almighty charge, carving through the pack to take him to third. A perfectly timed move at Turn 3 soon elevated him to second and he started to chase down leader Newsome. Aided by some backmarkers, he was right on his rival's tail as they started the final lap, and they crossed the line side by side, with a delighted Newsome getting the verdict by just 0.078s.

Reigning champion Graham McDonnell returned to the Fiesta ST class for a one-off outing and rattled the regulars by qualifying on pole. As series leader Eddie Peterson and Michael Cullen battled, he eased away for an impressive win. In race two, McDonnell battled up from sixth but couldn't catch Cullen, who had ousted his son Victor from the lead early on.

Aaron Gaughran's Dallara F307 beat poleman Tony Greenan's F317 off the line and was never headed in the opening Formula BOSS Ireland race. Greenan maintained his lead in race two and held off the fast-starting Michael Roche in the initial laps, before Roche slowed. Gaughran then got into a groove and closed down the leader, who rebuffed every challenge until a late-race lunge around Southside Corner got Gaughran alongside and he made it stick on the main straight to do the double.

Michael Cullen has had a tough Stryker season so far, but he took a strong win in the opener, keeping one eye on the mirrors, as his son Victor shadowed him all the way to the flag in an impressive, and popular, performance. Cullen Sr doubled up in race two from Jonathan Taylor, with Victor completing the podium in third.

John Whelan was first across the line in the opening Zetec race but a number of robust moves meant he was summoned to the officials and excluded. This gave Alan Dawson the win, from Phil Lawless and Eoin Murray, guesting in one of his team's cars.

Andy Kavanagh led race two well despite the best efforts of Murray, until a switchback at Southside worked to perfection and allowed him through. Murray was first across the line, but received a penalty from the officials for early-race contact with Lawless, dropping him down the order. This handed the win to Collie Barrable, with Kavanagh taking second and Dawson third.

Elsewhere, Mike Dermody's British Touring Car-liveried Vectra took the honours in the first Future Classics contest, with others falling foul of the dreaded barrier time. In race two, former Fiat pilot Paul Flanagan's beautifully presented Renault Clio 172 took the spoils.

Irish Legends ran on both days with Rob Barrable, guesting for his injured brother Peter, and Geoff Richardson taking three wins apiece after some highly entertaining racing. The finale was red-flagged and the crowds were treated to a five-minute sprint at the restart, with Barrable charging up to Richardson's bumper

Michael Cullen faced pressure from son Victor in Strykers

MICHAEL CHESTER

WEEKEND WINNERS

MONDELLO PARK
IRISH FORMULA VEE
Lee Newsome (Sheane)

FIESTA STs
Race 1 Graham McDonnell (below)
Race 2 Michael Cullen

FORMULA BOSS IRELAND
Races 1 & 2 Aaron Gaughran (Dallara F307)

IRISH STRYKERS
Races 1 & 2 Michael Cullen

FIESTA ZETECS
Race 1 Alan Dawson
Race 2 Colm Barrable

FUTURE CLASSICS
Race 1 Mike Dermody (Opel Vectra)
Race 2 Paul Flanagan (Renault Clio)

IRISH LEGENDS
Races 1, 3 & 5 Robert Barrable
Races 2, 4 & 6 Geoff Richardson

JUNIOR MINI CHALLENGE
Races 1 & 2 David Travers

IRISH SUPERKARTS
Races 1, 2 & 3 Alan Crossen (Anderson Maverick 250)

MICHAEL CHESTER

For full results visit: timing.ie

OULTON PARK
TCR UK
Race 1 Alex Ley (Hyundai i30 N TCR)
Race 2 Jamie Tonks (Cupra TCR)

CIVIC CUP
Race 1 Alistair Camp (EP3)
Race 2 Matt Luff (EP3)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

and shadowing him across the line.

David Travers took both Junior Mini Challenge victories, fighting off an early threat in race one from Fergus Chalmers, before he retired with clutch failure.

Gearbox karts made their annual Mondello appearance and Alan Crossen managed a hat-trick of wins in his 250cc Anderson machine, despite some stiff opposition. The 125cc glory was split between Michael Curran and Mick Dunnion, who starred in race two with a giantkilling fourth overall.

LEO NULTY

Smith into TCR UK lead as Ley and Tonks share spoils

Ley proved his Brands win was no fluke with another triumph
JEP

OULTON PARK
CTA
16 JULY

Alex Ley and Jamie Tonks were the TCR UK race winners at Oulton Park, while Isaac Smith's relentless consistency ignited his title challenge as others faltered.

Ley proved his ballast-free Brands Hatch win was no fluke by lugging the maximum 40kg of compensation weight to victory. He inherited pole position from Max Hart (see news) and dominated in his Daniel James Motorsport Hyundai i30 N. Suffering with understeer, Adam Shepherd's similar car — now run by Area Motorsport — was second.

Champion Lewis Kent struggled to ninth, hampered by his Hyundai Veloster's slipping clutch, putting him on race two's front row. He jumped into the lead, then fought a rearguard action against Cupra duo Bruce Winfield and Jamie Tonks.

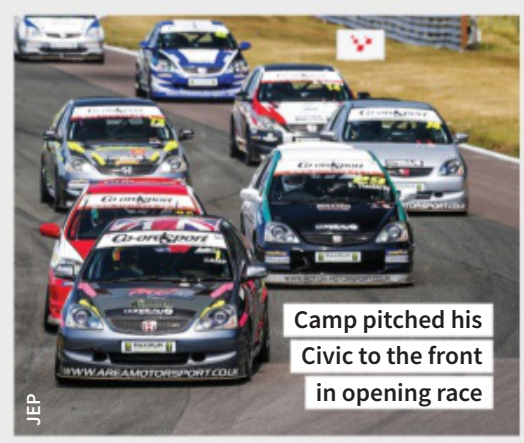
Kent's engine momentarily cut exiting Lodge mid-race, allowing Winfield ahead, with Kent's attempted Cascades fightback letting Tonks past too. Tonks then challenged Winfield at Island and, shadowed by Kent, the pair ran side by side over Hilltop. As Kent hit Winfield under braking, it let Tonks ahead for a maiden win and damaged Kent's splitter, leaving him with chronic understeer.

After passing Chris Smiley impressively around the outside at Island, Smith's Race Car Consultants Volkswagen Golf repeated the move on Kent to clinch his second podium of the day. His eighth top-four finish in nine races puts Smith atop the standings although, after two DNFs, Hart remains marginally ahead when dropped scores are removed.

A 15s track-limits penalty dropped Kent to 11th, with Smiley inheriting fourth despite his Honda suffering a lack of straightline speed under the current Balance of Performance.

Alistair Camp moved clear of Matt Luff in the Civic Cup points as the Area pair split the honours. Camp converted pole to victory in a very truncated opener after Jordan Brennan's heavy accident at Knickerbrook sent his car over the tyre wall. Morgan Bailey and Dan Thackeray completed the podium, with Luff seventh.

When Max Edmundson passed Harvey Caton for the lead of race two at Island, Luff got a run and further demoted Caton. Edmundson's mistake at Cascades then let Luff into the lead and, as the scraps behind continued, he scampered to victory by nearly 4s. Strong moves on the brakes took Jack Harding to second with Bailey in his wake, while Camp calmly climbed to fourth from 10th on the reversed grid.


Camp pitched his Civic to the front in opening race
JEP

MARK PAULSON

Mini success for Watkinson in Swinging ’60s

CASTLE COMBE
CSCC
16-17 JULY

Watkinson prevailed in the Swinging Sixties Group 1 contest

Minis were to the fore in the Castle Combe Swinging Sixties Group 1 contest last weekend. Chris Watkinson’s example initially sat third behind Matthew Howell’s similar machine and the Mini Marcos of Sam Polley until the pitstop window. But with success time penalties applied during the stops, Watkinson sealed the win from Mini pair Ralph and Charlie Budd, with Howell and Polley climbing back through the order to complete the top four.

No one got near Oliver Reuben in the family TVR Griffith in the Group 2 race, as Jamie Keevill (Lotus Elan S2) and Jon Wolfe (Tuscan) had an early duel for second. Reuben was able to hand a massive advantage to father Nigel who, despite collecting a 30-second pitlane infringement penalty, was still over 23s clear of Keevill at the flag.

After a tardy start, poleman Jonny Pittard regained the Magnificent Sevens lead from Robert Singleton exiting Quarry on lap four of 21. Singleton then started to lose ground and, with a mistake at Camp on lap 11, lost second to Tim Davis. Pittard was back in front after the pitstops, but Colin Watson rejoined second and came under tremendous pressure from Alex Fores.

Fores appeared to have got by into Camp, but brake failure put him heavily into the barriers, bringing out the red flags while Fores was taken to hospital. Pittard was later disqualified for a yellow-flag infringement, which handed Watson the win.

There were only eight starters in the second race, where Pittard took the win from Singleton, with Watson a solitary third.

Alexander Hewitson’s Austin-Healey 3000 Mk2 fended off Marcos GTS racer Allen Tice for the opening nine Classic K laps, with Jennifer Ridgway (Lotus Elan GTS) challenging until she spun at Quarry. After the stops, Graham Ridgway — in for Jennifer — reeled in Hewitson and was ahead exiting Quarry on lap 31 of 42. He was comfortably in front at the flag too, only to receive a 34s penalty for a short pitstop, dropping him to second behind Hewitson, but still well clear of Chris Conoley/Tice.

Kevin Jones’s Noble M12 led the Slicks Series race until the pitstop window, after which Douglas Watson was in charge in his Ferrari 488 until it was announced that he would be penalised for a short stop. Jones

Win apiece for Croft and White after epic battles

SILVERSTONE
CMMC
17 JULY

Adam Croft snatched a dramatic victory at the penultimate corner of a pulsating Track Attack Race Club contest.

From a varied 35-car grid, Kristian White led initially in his Toyota MR2 Roadster, poleman David Clark having made a sluggish start in his Renault 5 GT Turbo and dropping to fifth. Croft, driving a Peugeot 205 GTI, took the lead from White at the end of the opening lap around Silverstone’s National layout.

Kirkpatrick and Rideout shared Mini wins

MICK WALKER

Four laps later, with Croft withstanding White’s advances, the eight-car lead group was split when Clark touched the rear of Chris Bassett’s Peugeot 306 GTI leaving Luffield as he challenged for third, Bassett spinning to eighth. Clark continued and, when Croft got sideways at Becketts on lap eight of 14, he took second at Brooklands, with White already into the lead.

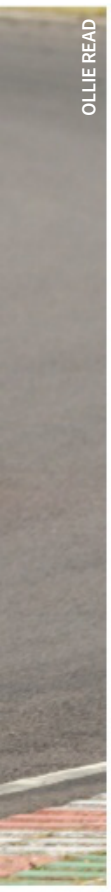
Croft and Clark traded places a couple more times until, with a comfortable margin at Brooklands on the final lap, White had a huge moment that allowed Croft to grab the win at Luffield. White settled for second from Clark.

White gained redemption in the second race, but not before another moment at Brooklands three laps from home cost him a decent lead over Croft. Having lost the race there earlier, he won the rematch by diving through on the inside line to retake the lead on the last tour. Bassett made a strong start and held third throughout.

Neven Kirkpatrick bounced back four times on his way to the first Super Mighty Minis honours. He held the lead at first but Steve Rideout grabbed it at Copse on lap three, with Kirkpatrick slipping to third behind Stuart Coombs. He dragged himself back into contention, before diving down the inside of Rideout into Brooklands on lap eight to retake the initiative.

Rideout was soon back into the lead, then lost it again at Brooklands — this time amid traffic. Coombs assumed the advantage when the leaders went three-wide into Becketts on lap 11 of 16, but there was still time for a few more lead changes. Rideout had the place at the start of the final lap but again lost out to Kirkpatrick at Brooklands. Kirkpatrick’s brother David was third, while the Mighty Minis division was relatively sedate, although Mark Price shadowed points leader Darren Nightingale throughout.

It was the Mighty Minis’ turn to shine


OLLIE READ

Hewitson finished second on the road but was handed Classic K win

OLLIE READ

homed in anyway, but his bid to pass the Ferrari ended in contact at the Esses, forcing Watson out and elevating the close-following Charles Hyde-Andrews-Bird, in the Porsche 991 started by father Kevin Bird, into the lead. Jones fought back, got on the grass trying to pass the Porsche at Quarry and clouted the barrier, but continued after a pitstop to remove a flailing barrier cover. Nathan Wells inherited second in his BMW.

Mark Chilton (Nissan Skyline GTR) led the Mazda RX7 of Alex Taylor after an early Future Classics duel. But Chilton was unable to recover fully from his 60s success penalty and had to settle for second, with Darren Clayden's Porsche 944 S2 a lap down in third.

Alfie Jones (Honda Civic Type R) comfortably led Tin Tops after the mandatory stops, with Danny Cassar's Integra Type R ousting Adam Brown (Ford Fiesta ST) for second five laps from home.

Alex Taylor's Tuscan Challenge dominated the first part of the Modern Classics encounter, but safety car chaos and a red flag brought the race to a premature end. Colin Tester/Brian Richardson (Porsche Boxster S) were declared the winners.

PETER SCHERER

Croft (left) and White tussled for wins in both Track Attack races

MICK WALKER

in race two – but without Nightingale, who was involved in a race-stopping incident on the Wellington Straight. Olly Samways came through from the back to lead briefly but later retired, and James Jenkins made some of the running, but Price prevailed while Rideout led all but a lap overall at the front.

Roy Chamberlain took two dominant Classic and Modern Motorsport Club Classic Challenge wins in his Triumph TR250, with rival John Goldsmith's Aston Martin crashing out at the second corner. Alan Charlton's TR6 faded, leaving Nic Strong's Ford Capri to be best of the rest.

Chris Everill won both Welsh Racing Drivers Association/CMMC Modern races in his mighty Ginetta G55 after David Krayem's G50 retired from the first. Krayem fared better in race two, climbing back to second, while Andrew Mitchell was the star in the concurrent 206 GTI Cup.

In the 116 Trophy, there was a plethora of track-limits penalties, including a disqualification for Sam Carrington-Yates/Mark Sullivan, who might otherwise have beaten Rob Carvell.

IAN SOWMAN

WEEKEND WINNERS

OLLIE READ

CASTLE COMBE

SWINGING SIXTIES
Group 1 Chris Watkinson (Austin Mini)
Group 2 Oliver/Nigel Reuben (TVR Griffith)

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS
Race 1 Colin Watson (Caterham C400)
Race 2 Jonny Pittard (Caterham 7 CSR)

CLASSIC K
Alexander Hewitson (Austin-Healey 3000 Mk2)

SLICKS SERIES
Kevin Bird/Charles Hyde-Andrews-Bird (Porsche 991 Carrera Cup)

FUTURE CLASSICS
Alex Taylor (Mazda RX-7, above)

TIN TOPS
Alfie Jones (Honda Civic Type R)

MODERN CLASSICS
Colin Tester/Brian Richardson (Porsche Boxster S)

NEW MILLENNIUM
Mark Smith/Chris Boardman (BMW M3 E36 Evo)

OPEN SERIES
Jamie Sturges (VW Golf TCR)

SILVERSTONE

TRACK ATTACK RACE CLUB
Race 1 Adam Croft (Peugeot 205 GTI)
Race 2 Kristian White (Toyota MR2 Mk3 Roadster)

MIGHTY MINIS
Race 1 Neven Kirkpatrick
Race 2 Steve Rideout

CMMC CLASSIC CHALLENGE
Races 1 & 2 Roy Chamberlain (Triumph TR250)

CMMC MODERN CHALLENGE/ WRDA SPORTS & SALOONS
Races 1 & 2 Chris Everill (Ginetta G55)

116 TROPHY
Rob Carvell (below)

MICK WALKER

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Hitchen's away day drive yields a double win

CADWELL PARK
SMRC
16 JULY

The Scottish C1 Cup provided the most drama at the Scottish Motor Racing Club's Cadwell Park away day on Saturday, with novice James Hitchen pushing aside championship leader Finlay Brunton and a determined Kyle Nisbet.

Hitchen, who drove his C1 to Cadwell all the way from his home in Cockermouth, clung to the back of a leading group that included polesitter Sam Corson, Brunton and Nisbet and took a lap or two to show his hand. Nisbet was the early leader but Hitchen showed he was not to be intimidated, making contact and grabbing the lead. Brunton's efforts came to nothing when his car expired late on, but second-placed Nisbet and Corson in third continued to threaten, although Hitchen held on for the win.

Nisbet was Hitchen's chief rival in the second, reversed-grid race, quickly getting to the front from Ross Dunn and Corson. Again, Hitchen did not attack immediately, but a forceful move at the top of the Mountain, using all the track, put him ahead. Nisbet held on to second despite a steering lock-up, and Corson overhauled Dunn for third late on.

The Minis provided similarly close action. The smaller Cooper S class was won both times by multiple champion Oliver Mortimer, although he was pushed in the opener by Craig Blake, who was in turn passed by his brother Jamie and Andrew Lamont. Mortimer had it easier in race two and built up a lead, although he was helped by the retirement of Craig Blake on the first lap with engine trouble.

The first Cooper class race was a two-way contest between championship leader Michael Weddell and Chad Little. Weddell was already ahead when Little had a small off towards the end, but he remained in front of Neil Hose. Little got the better of Weddell in race two, having been part of a three-car slipstreaming pack with Hose. Weddell won the third Cooper-only race, while Jamie Blake triumphed in the Allcomers Trophy ahead of Lamont.

The Classic Sports and Saloon encounters featured a win apiece for Russell Paterson's Morgan +8 and John Kinmond's Rover 3500. Paterson was a convincing race-one victor, finishing over 10 seconds in front of Kinmond, who passed Triumph TR8 driver Andrew Graham early on. Graham kept third place, despite some strong challenges from Martin Reynolds at the wheel of a Ford Escort.

Paterson had to pull out of the sequel due to steering problems caused by a part on the column rubbing against the inner wing, with son Elliot — seventh in the first race — also forced onto the sidelines. This left the way clear for a Kinmond victory, chased by Reynolds. Again, Reynolds tried to make a move at various points, but was never quite close enough on the narrow circuit to do so. Graham was third, having been passed briefly by the MGB GT of Alastair Baptie, but quickly regained his place.

Elsewhere, Liam McGill was a comfortable double Fiesta ST Cup winner, leading throughout each race.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER

Nisbet chases but couldn't deny Hitchen the C1 spoils
STEVE JONES

Weddell was again at the front in Scottish Minis
STEVE JONES

Paterson leads Kinmond. They shared Classic honours
STEVE JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

SCOTTISH C1 CUP
Races 1 & 2 James Hitchen

SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CUP
Races 1 & 2 Oliver Mortimer (Cooper S)
Race 3 Michael Weddell (Cooper)

ALLCOMERS TROPHY
Jamie Blake (Mini Cooper S)

SCOTTISH CLASSIC SPORTS AND SALOONS
Race 1 Russell Paterson (Morgan +8)
Race 2 John Kinmond (Rover 3500)

SCOTTISH FIESTA ST CUP
Races 1 & 2 Liam McGill

For full results visit: smart-timing.co.uk

Reigning champion was only defeated once as British Hillclimb series returned to Channel Islands

PAUL LAWRENCE

Impressive Menzies slides his way to Channel Islands hat-trick

BOULEY BAY & VAL DES TERRES
BRITISH HILLCLIMB
13 & 16 JULY

It was a case of three out of four for Wallace Menzies as the British Hillclimb Championship made a welcome return to the Channel Islands last week for the first time in three years.

With two run-off wins on Jersey on Wednesday and a third on Guernsey on Saturday, it was a big trip for the reigning champion. But as usual, Alex Summers and Scott Moran ran him close and the narrowest of his three wins was by just 0.01s. Summers won the first run-off on Guernsey and bagged a new hill record to keep the title race bubbling nicely.

Menzies left Jersey with two more wins under his belt after a day of fierce competition, slipping and sliding on the Bouley Bay hill. Though blessed with warm and sunny conditions, the track was dirty to start the day and still offered less than optimum grip by the end of the afternoon. But that didn't stop the Scotsman winning twice in two hard-fought run-offs.

In the opening bout, Menzies was on target for a win by three or four tenths until the final hairpin when his Gould GR59 slid perilously close to the grass bank. To his credit, Menzies kept it planted, corrected the opposite lock and fired off over the line to set a 37.39s time. Incredibly, that was 0.01s better than Moran had managed moments earlier. Last to run was Summers, and he wailed the Cosworth Indycar-engined DJ Firestorm up the climb in style to stop the clock at 37.44s, leaving the top three covered by just 0.05s.

Menzies admitted that he had nearly thrown it all away at the last corner but, miraculously, he had done enough in the lower reaches of the hill to secure another victory. Trevor Willis, Richard Spedding (in the best of the under two-litre cars) and Matthew Ryder rounded out a competitive top six.

On the second run-offs, it was Summers who clocked a 37.02s to throw the gauntlet down to his rivals. Willis, Spedding and Moran were all in the mid-37s and so it all came down to Menzies on the very last climb of the day. After another round of tweaking traction control settings on the mighty Gould, Menzies rocketed off the line and stormed the hill to set the fastest time of the day at 36.85s and secure his second win. "The grip levels here are a lot lower than we're used to," admitted Menzies after two storming climbs.

Elsewhere in the top 10, Ryder approached his first time on the hill by building his pace all day to bag two sixth places, while local hero Nick Saunders from Guernsey topped the home challenge in his Reynick with eighth and seventh places.

Three days later on Guernsey, the competition was just as tight at Val des Terres on the twisting public road climb up from St Peter Port. The first run-off could not have been closer as Summers pipped Menzies by 0.01s and they both climbed 0.4s under Moran's 2016 record.

Menzies later exactly matched his 26.57s climb to clinch the second run-off and extend his points lead to eight, while Summers slipped to fourth behind Moran and the flying Spedding, who topped the under two-litre cars throughout. Willis claimed two more top-six finishes, and Saunders again headed the hard-charging home contingent.

PAUL LAWRENCE

HILLCLIMB RESULTS

ROUND 19 (BOULEY BAY)
1 Wallace Menzies (3.3 Gould-Cosworth GR59M) 37.39s; 2 Scott Moran (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59J) 37.40s; 3 Alex Summers (2.7 DJ-Cosworth Firestorm) 37.44s; 4 Trevor Willis (3.2 OMS 28-RTE) 37.57s; 5 Richard Spedding (1.6 GWR-Hayabusa Raptor 2) 38.05s; 6 Matthew Ryder (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59JB) 38.86s; 7 Paul Haimes (1.3t Gould-Suzuki GR59) 38.89s; 8 Nick Saunders (1.6 Reynick-Hayabusa) 39.09s; 9 David Warburton (1.6 Gould-Suzuki GR59) 40.02s; 10 Nicola Menzies (3.5 Gould-NME GR55B) 40.38s.

ROUND 20 (BOULEY BAY)
1 W Menzies 36.85s; 2 Summers 37.02s; 3 Willis 37.41s; 4 Spedding 37.56s; 5 Moran 37.60s; 6 Ryder 38.39s; 7 Saunders 38.57s; 8 David Uren (3.5 Gould-NME GR55B) 39.02s; 9 Warburton 39.91s; 10 N Menzies 40.04s.

ROUND 21 (VAL DES TERRES)
1 Summers 26.56s (below); 2 W Menzies 26.57s; 3 Moran 27.06s; 4 Spedding 27.31s; 5 Willis 27.52s; 6 Saunders 27.63s; 7 Tim Tulie (1.1 Empire-Hayabusa 00) 28.15s; 8 Uren 28.40s; 9 Warburton 28.59s; 10 Steve Brehaut (1.4 Empire-Suzuki Evo 3) 28.66s.

ROUND 22 (VAL DES TERRES)
1 W Menzies 26.57s; 2 Moran 26.86s; 3 Spedding 27.12s; 4 Summers 27.25s; 5 Saunders 27.48s; 6 Willis 27.62s; 7 Tulie 28.08s; 8 Warburton 28.14s; 9 Matt Bougourd (1.3 Force-Suzuki) 28.66s; 10 Brehaut 28.68s.

POINTS
1 W Menzies 205; 2 Summers 197; 3 Moran 188; 4 Willis 138; 5 Ryder 123; 6 Uren 96.

PAUL LAWRENCE

For full results visit: britishhillclimb.co.uk

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Group B remains rallying's most famous era. Here's Juha Kankkunen, New Zealand 1986

Images that celebrate rallying history

BOOK REVIEW

WRC 50: THE STORY OF THE WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 1973-2022

Markus Stier

RRP £44

While not everyone is a diehard fan — or 'bobblehatter' as they're more affectionately known in the UK, usually due to the generally bitterly cold conditions they brave (something we could do with this week) — there's no denying that every motorsport enthusiast should have an admiration for top-level rallying.

Very few drivers have the skill and courage to be able to travel at speed on asphalt, gravel or snow, while dealing with blind bends, jumps and the constant flow of information from their co-driver, all while millimetres from disaster.

For 50 years drivers, as well as manufacturers, have pushed themselves and their machines to the limit in a bid to scale the heights of the World Rally Championship. The WRC has unsurprisingly changed considerably over the past five decades, with cars moving from rear to four-wheel-drive, normally aspirated engines becoming turbocharged, then hybrid, and safety advancing considerably for crews and spectators.

There's also been an abundance of new events across the globe in different climates, while rallies that covered hundreds of miles and stages that lasted for hours have been trimmed massively in the modern era in a bid to improve the spectacle for television viewers.

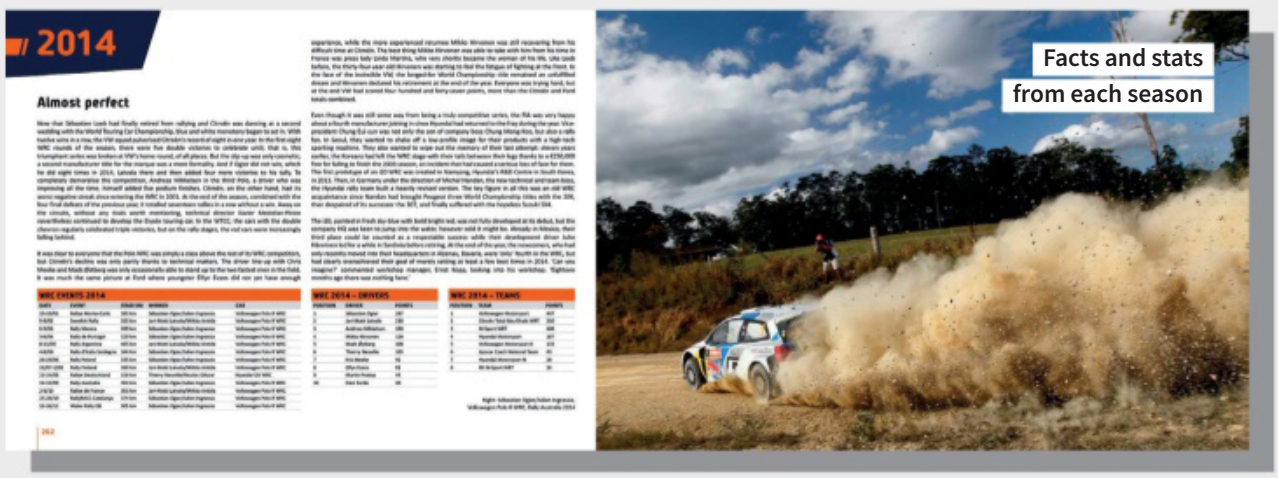
WRC 50: The story of the World Rally Championship 1973-2022, written by renowned rallying expert Markus Stier, does exactly what the title suggests and recounts those changes through each year of the championship across 320 pages.

Given the broad subject and relatively standard length of the book, that still hasn't prevented Stier from covering off the main talking points from each year concisely and factually.

More column inches are given at the start of each chapter (covering 1973-1982, 1983-1986, 1987-1996 and 1997-2021), which details significant regulation changes or sport-defining moments, such as the emergence and eventual ban of Group B machines.

Each season also contains a list of every rally that formed part of that year's championship, total kilometres covered at the event, as well as the winning crew and their cars. There's also the final manufacturers' points standings, and the drivers' points since that series was instigated in 1979. The book also runs into the 2022 season, with the new Rally1 changes covered and the opening two rounds at Monte Carlo and Sweden mentioned.

Without doubt though the major selling point of this item is the incredible range of images that are scattered throughout by



McKLEIN

McKLEIN

Henning Solberg missing his 'screen, Sweden 2006

McKlein Publishing, which has released the book. There are 362, many of which are unique to this publication, and illustrate the fact that perhaps more than any other discipline of motorsport, rallying produces the most spectacular imagery. With some images filling the 29.7x21cm pages, it really does showcase them in all their spectacular, and sometimes grubby, glory.

At £44 it's not the cheapest of books, especially for one that while offering a good general overview of each season doesn't go into too much depth. With that being said, the quality of the images and their fantastic range means you're unlikely to find a better photographic resource covering 50 years of the WRC. And certainly for non-rallying fans, it's the perfect gateway to learn more about the championship and its incredible history.

STEFAN MACKLEY

AUTOSPORT F1 AND MOTORSPORT

autosport.com/podcast

McKLEIN motorsport IMAGES

WRC Rally Estonia review

Toyota's Kalle Rovanpera moved a step closer to securing a record-breaking World Rally Championship title after delivering a stunning performance to win Rally Estonia. On the latest edition of the Autosport Podcast, join Martyn Lee and WRC reporter Tom Howard as they discuss all the key talking points from Rovanpera's masterclass display.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

French Grand Prix
Formula 1 World Championship
Round 12/22
Paul Ricard, France
24 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355
TV **Highlights** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1730; Channel 4, Sun 1830

IndyCar Series
Round 11/16
Iowa Speedway, USA
23-24 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 2100, Sun 2000

FIA Formula 2
Round 9/14
Paul Ricard, France
23-24 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 1655, Sun 0830

W Series
Round 4/8
Paul Ricard, France
23 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 1330

Porsche Supercup
Round 5/8
Paul Ricard, France
24 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1045; Eurosport 1, Sun 1100

Indy Lights
Round 7/11
Iowa Speedway, USA
23 July

World Touring Car Cup
Round 6/10
Vallelunga, Italy
24 July
TV **Live** Eurosport 1, Sun 1000, Eurosport 2, Sun 1900 (delayed)

eTouring Car World Cup
Round 5/6
Vallelunga, Italy
23-24 July

British GT
Round 5/7
Spa, Belgium
24 July
Livestream on motorsport.tv, Sun 1115

GB3
Round 5/8
Spa, Belgium
23-24 July
Livestream via gb-3.net, Sat 1350, Sat 1850, Sun 1035

NASCAR Cup Series
Round 21/36
Pocono, USA
24 July
TV **Live** Premier Sports 2, Sun 1930

NASCAR Xfinity Series
Round 19/33
Pocono, USA
23 July

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park BRSCC
23 July
BMW Compact Cup, Mazda MX-5s (Championship, Clubman, Supercup), Super Classic Pre-'99 FF1600

Lydden Hill LHMC
23 July
CMMC (Intermarque, Super Saloons, Tin Tops), European Late Model, Pickups

Snetterton BRSCC
23-24 July
CityCar Cup, Clubsport Trophy, Fiestas, Fiesta Juniors, Fun Cup, Modified Ford Series, National FF1600

Anglesey Ferrari Owners Club
23-24 July
Alfa Romeos, Ferrari Challenge, Ferrari Classic, Northern Saloons & Sports Cars

British Drag Racing Championship
Santa Pod
23-24 July

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Lancia 037s driven by Markku Alen and Jean-Claude Andruet are attended to in a picturesque but rudimentary service park setting *[such a contrast to today's arrangements, page 24 – ed]* during the 1983 Tour de Corse. Lancia dominated the rally – in the early stages its cars filled the top five positions, their rear-wheel-drive characteristics better suiting the Mediterranean island event's sealed surfaces than the all-wheel traction of championship rival Audi. The final result was a Lancia 1-2-3-4 led by Alen, the only fly in the ointment for the Italian marque being the retirement of Andruet with a terminal engine issue.

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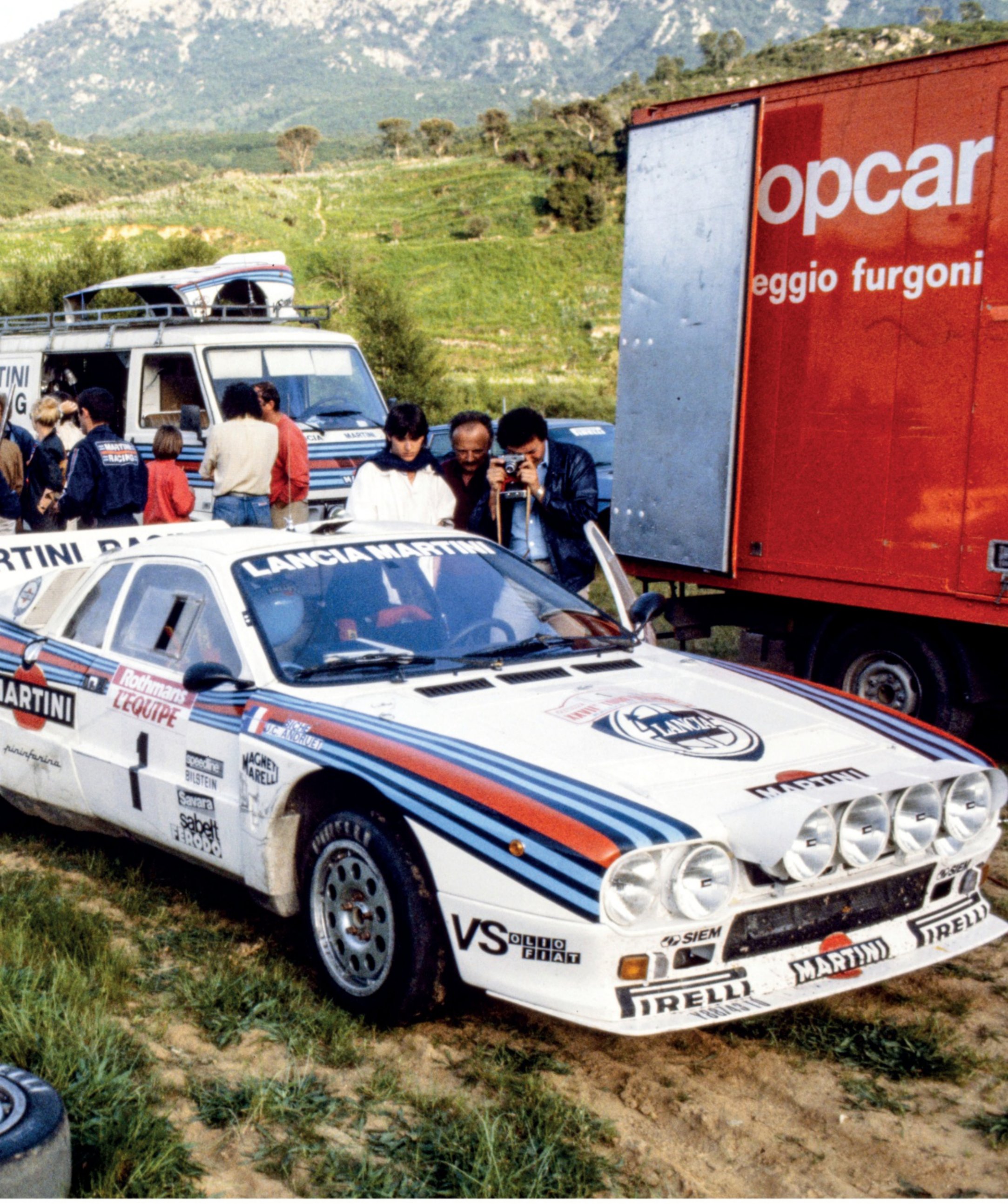

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NICK CASSIDY

MY FAVOURITE... TRACK

Sugo

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

MAIN: YASUSHI ISHIHARA; INSET: GALLOWAY

It takes a lot of commitment and bravery for a racing driver to turn their back on Europe or the United States to go racing in Japan. In an unfamiliar country, with unfamiliar cars and unfamiliar circuits, it's incredibly hard to adapt. Yet everyone who's ever plied their trade in either Super Formula or Super GT waxes lyrical about their experiences. Andre Lotterer describes the racing there as "pure"; the circuits aren't designed with acres of runoff, and the cars are powerful and grippy — Japan is a real racer's haven.

Nick Cassidy agrees. Although the 2019 Super Formula champion joined Formula E for the 2020-21 season, the cast of Japanese circuits firmly remains in his heart.

"I really like tracks that punish mistakes," says the 27-year-old. "So whether that's a street circuit that's quite high risk — or, for example, one track that sticks out to me is Sugo in Japan. It's very high speed, but very little runoff. It punishes mistakes."

Circuits in Japan are designed to a very different code compared to those commissioned by F1; they're not formatted for DRS zones or for the express purpose of creating overtaking. They're designed to be challenging. Sugo, a 2.3-mile circuit in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture about a half-hour's drive from the city of Sendai, is one such. Sure, there are flat-out straights, but there are also tight corner complexes and high-speed turns that require the utmost commitment.

"It's very high speed and the cars obviously have a lot of grip," says Cassidy, who explains that the physicality of racing in Japan requires drivers to be in peak condition. "After winter testing in Japan, your body gets smashed. It's the fittest I've been in my life!"

Of his three Super Formula victories, Cassidy's last was at Sugo in 2020, when he won by four seconds and set fastest lap. "I think that style of circuit is, for me, the most thrilling," he adds wistfully.

You get the feeling that if Formula E ever lands an E-Prix in Japan, the Kiwi will be the first on the plane.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

HONE

Can Leclerc keep up the pressure?

RED BULL-FERRARI BATTLE HEADS TO THE FRENCH GP

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